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THE READING TEACHER

Challenges Facing the Teacher of Reading in 1957

Classroom Organization for
the Improvement of Reading

Published by

INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION

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THE THEME for this issue of THE READING TEACHER is CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF READING. The accent is on organization. Organization is the structure or framework within which the teacher, in this case, operates to carry on the activities of her classroom. It is the mode in which something is organized, as the dictionary states, or systematic arrangements for a definite purpose.

Organization varies with purpose and one's educational philosophy. There are those who decry the existence of organization. They feel organization is a curse that interferes with effective and flexible execution of the educational program. There are others who feel that organization is frequently a hindrance rather than a help. Their difficulty lies in inadequate conception of organization, not in organization *per se*, in the nature of organization, as it were. Inadequate conceptions of the role of organization are usually to blame. Organization is absolutely necessary if the enterprise is to proceed in an efficient and successful manner. This is especially true in a program of developmental reading. Most reading experts agree that plans are very necessary. Chaos results if there is no plan of organization. Organization must be the servant of an educational task.

Dr. Gertrude Whipple, supervisor of language arts education for the Detroit Public Schools and a widely known reading expert, is one who believes in the importance of good organization in teaching reading. She is the Guest Editor for this issue on this important phase of improving reading instruction. With her rich school experience as a background, she has had prepared for us a series of six articles by other experts in various sections of the country. The articles are practical and comprehensive. I am sure you will find them interesting to read. Your editor wants to thank Dr. Whipple and the staff of writers who prepared the articles for a job well done.

Are you finding what you want in THE READING TEACHER? If you have any suggestions for articles, features, or themes, won't you send them to me? Have you done something especially outstanding in your class? Why not pass the idea on to other teachers through your magazine. If you have questions on your mind that pertain to our work, won't you write me a letter today?

In the February issue the theme will be "Making the Most of Children's Interests in the Teaching of Reading." Dr. Ruth G. Strickland, professor of education, University of Indiana, is Guest Editor. We expect some excellent articles on this timely subject. Dr. Emmett A. Betts is preparing the lead article for the issue. We can always expect something challenging from his writing. I am sure you will want to call these items to the attention of your friends.

THE EDITOR

Challenges Facing the Teacher Of Reading in 1957

• by GERALD A. YOAKAM

THE MODERN TEACHER of reading is challenged by problems unknown to the teacher of a quarter of a century or more ago. This is because she knows more about the teaching of reading than her predecessor and also because publicity, both favorable and unfavorable, has made parents and interested laymen more critical of the teaching of reading than ever before. Practically every magazine that reaches into the American home has carried articles on the teaching of reading since Mr. Nameless published his book a couple of years ago.

As I see it, there are several challenging problems facing the reading teacher today that should receive her most careful thought. True, the teacher of reading is so busy teaching the children of America to read that she seldom has time to draw a breath much less to reply to the critics of public education, the most obnoxious of whom are those who indulge only in negative criticism and wish to go back to the good old days when "all children learned to read" without any failures whatever. What a race of men and children there were then, my hearers!

Critical Articles in Magazines Create Challenges

What should we do about the critical articles appearing in the magazines and the newspapers? This is a question that has been annoying teachers for two or three years now. Every now

and then some prophet speaks out against the teaching of reading and some of the more intelligent, but ill-informed patrons, rush to the schoolhouse in wild-eyed indignation. They want to know "how come little Reginald is not reading as well as mama or papa did at his age." Generally they say mama, for it is well known that women are smarter than men and that mama always could beat papa talking and reading by two or three laps. Some teachers will say that when this happens the thing to do is to send them to the principal. Let him or her do it. Aren't they paid for it? That, however, will not solve the problem.

Criticism of reading instruction is a staff problem and should be taken up by the Reading Committee. Every school should have a reading or language arts committee which should be composed of all teachers. This committee should take up the public relations problem that is involved here and use the best possible strategy to cope with it. There are several possibilities: (1) the parent-teachers' organizations; (2) articles in the newspaper; (3) school bulletins to parents; (4) open letters to the parents; (5) parents' day reading demonstrations; (6) informal conferences with parents; and (7) carefully formulated reports to the parents on the reading situation. The latter two or three measures are probably the most effective, although they take time.

The problem is so crucial, however, that principals and teachers, as well as administrative officers higher up, must give it top-level professional consideration and treatment. If teachers and principals don't know the answer to the problem of criticism, they must get the answer. Reading consultants may help temporarily, but the permanent remedy is for teachers and principals to become thoroughly informed. How has reading been doing in the local schools? What evidence is there that it is better, or worse, than it was ten years or five years ago? Are children reading and how much? What outstanding examples of good reading can be cited? Answers to these and other questions properly presented to patrons will allay their anxiety and secure their allegiance. Many times the schools are criticized because neither the administrative nor teaching staff has time to answer the critics. In spite of over-crowding and over-loading, however, ways must be found to report intelligently to the public concerning their children. And in the meantime, intelligent and capable teachers should be writing for the magazines and newspapers, to keep the public informed.

Challenges Created by the Slow-Learner

Another crucial problem facing the reading teacher is and always has been, *What to do about the slow-learning child?* Mr. Nameless blithely passes these by on the other side when he discusses the teaching of reading. To him all children should learn to read, regardless of their ability. All

you need is a magic formula. It is very simple: just use my method of teaching to read and all will be well. This is in spite of the fact that there have always been slow-learners in school and there have always been failures to learn to read. We used to drop such children as soon as possible. Now we keep them all up to the age of 16, or thereabouts, and try to teach the slow child as if he were bright. The result is that we do not do justice either to the fast learning or the slow-learning child.

The schools must definitely adjust the load to the child's ability and allow for different rates of progress. Children of different abilities perform at different levels now and will do so in the future. Adults are also highly different in the levels at which they read. It is definitely more wholesome to differentiate instruction for children of different ability levels than to have them founder and fail. The dull child has always been a problem to teachers and always will be until the schools decide to teach each child to the limits of his ability and enrich laterally on different levels instead of accelerating children beyond their mental and educational ages.

Of course many teachers will say, "It's all right to talk about differentiation, but just try and do it. With all the children I have, all the things to teach, all the reports and meetings to attend, I am poohed out by the end of the day and devastated by the end of the week." There's a lot of truth in this statement, but it doesn't solve the problem. Perhaps the easiest way

is the common-sense way. Give the slow-learning child things which he can read. Differentiate materials as much as possible. Go slower with the slow learner. Help the child informally as much as time and strength will permit. And don't give up, but keep on trying. If the modern teacher is to be respected by laymen, she must become as competent to handle individuals as the expert in other fields. Excuses won't help. The problem must be faced squarely and solved.

What to do About Phonics

One of the most torrid problems which faces the reading teacher is, *What to do about phonics?* To some critics of the public schools, phonics seems not to be a professional problem but rather a religion. Without the slightest knowledge of the nature and constitution of the English language and with no knowledge of the psychology of teaching reading, they immediately rush to the conclusion that it is best to go back to the good old days. Having forgotten all about the way they learned to read, they reason logically and say that since words are made up of letters and letters represent sounds, all you need to do is to teach the child the sounds of the letters and he will be able to read and write anything. Would that it were as simple as that. The record shows, however, that one can't depend upon phonics alone to teach the child independence in word recognition.

Since the storm over phonics arose, many teachers have yielded to public criticism, and have gone back to teaching phonics after some fashion which

they may have learned twenty or more years ago. Unfortunately, they will find that after a time they will still have reading problems on their hands. For English is far from a phonetic language and a considerable amount of reconstruction will have to take place if it is ever to become fully phonetic.

As it looks from here, the thing to do is to teach phonics sensibly and functionally. Whenever phonics will help to unlock a word, use it. Use phonics as soon as the mental age of the child will allow him to cope with it. Teach the phonics of speech—ear phonics—as well as the phonics which functions in reading and spelling. But don't neglect to emphasize word-form analysis, structural analysis, syllabication, and the use of the dictionary as an aid to word recognition and pronunciation. Teach phonics as long as it will help the child in his reading and writing and in any situation where it will improve his ability to identify words. Teach a combination of approaches to word recognition rather than depend upon a single one and you will in the long run develop reading power.

Television Has Its Problems

Another crucial problem which, in spite of much effort spent upon it, still challenges the reading teacher: *What to do about radio and television?* The present writer does, of course, not have a perfect answer to this problem any more than you have. We are living in an age of electronic marvels. This is the first generation of children who ever were weaned and reared on

radio and television. Howdy Doody and Mr. Temple bid for the child's time and compete with good reading for his attention. For a time it may appear that the advertisers have it and that the schools should go along with the trend, install television studios, and prepare to instruct the children electronically.

The answer to the problem, as it seems to me, is to develop more attractive and interesting reading programs. If Paul Witty is correct, all is not yet lost to television. There is some evidence that children at first become almost unmanageable in their television conduct and then gradually become more sane and televise somewhat less. At any rate, neither teacher nor school can stop the trend. The thing to do, therefore, is to evaluate the school's reading program (some schools don't have any) and to begin the development of a balanced program of reading which will satisfy the child's need for information and recreation. Here again the Reading Committee of the school should deliberate and plan a long-range program of enrichment in the reading program. Parents, local librarians, and interested laymen should be enlisted in a program to retard the influences which interfere with the personal development of the child. Properly used television is an educational asset. The teacher and the school must plan and develop a program that will utilize television as an educational force but not permit it to drive out other important educational agencies.

Problems of Reading in Curricular Areas

Another challenging problem which will occupy the attention of the reading teacher now and in the future still is, *How can I get the children to read effectively the materials of the school curriculum?* This problem has faced us ever since we discovered silent reading and became conscious that reading is a tool for learning. It is still unsolved. There are several things that prevent progress. Among them are textbooks in the curricular areas that are too difficult for the children to read, lack of supplementary material of an informational character for use in the curricular areas, and lack of know-how on the part of teachers. This problem must be met and solved. It is not a passing problem but will remain with us until reading is taught functionally. This year every teacher should attempt to do something about it.

One of the most practical ways to deal with the problem is the organization of materials on different levels of difficulty for use in the curricular fields. Another is to teach the common basal study-skills more effectively. All the study skills that are common to all curricular situations should definitely be initiated and taught in the basal reading program. All teachers should be responsible for the development and use of these basic reading-study skills.

As a start this year, the teacher might well take one small area in which books are used as tools for learning and map out a beginning pro-

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FEATURE THEME:

Classroom Organization for the Improvement Of Reading

Introduction

BEFORE WE KNOW IT, the New Year will be upon us, and we shall be striving for better teaching of reading than we have attained in the past. So let's take a forward look at reading. For superior children, with high intelligence, extensive background, and advanced reading skills, we want to provide conditions that will promote their rapid growth. This may present to us serious problems in classrooms having large enrollments. For children who have not made normal progress for their potentialities, we recognize the need of providing small group or even individual instruction, but again we are baffled by the problem of fitting it into a crowded schedule. Between these two extremes, the superior and the retarded children, are many other types who also require stimulation and guidance.

As we search for better procedures, specific questions that may pester us are:

- How should a classroom be organized for reading instruction?
- How can reading be related to the other phases of the language program—to speaking, listening, and writing?
- How is literature fitted into the program?

- What is the place of the basic reader in teaching reading?
- What procedures will insure that children will acquire the essential reading skills such as word-recognition skills?
- What should be the appearance of the classroom that is the background for the teaching of reading?
- How soon in the semester should a teacher begin to teach?
- How can a teacher use reading in the content areas to contribute scientific attitudes and to enrich the child's understandings and appreciations?

This issue of *THE READING TEACHER* presents no brief, positive answers to such questions as the foregoing. Rather it gives new insight into classroom problems, thereby enabling us to make decisions that will improve our practices. The several authors represent a wide geographic area. The first two articles apply to the entire elementary school, the third to the primary grades, and the fourth to the middle grades. The remaining articles are concerned with guidance of reading in subject matter areas.

GERTRUDE WHIPPLE
Guest Editor

Creating a Challenging Classroom Environment

by RUTH G. STRICKLAND

● PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION
INDIANA UNIVERSITY

NOTHING PERTAINING to present day schools would astonish teachers of two or three generations ago more than the change which has taken place in the physical appearance of the environment in which "schooling" takes place. Drabness has been replaced by color, bleakness and emptiness have been filled with carefully contrived interest centers that call out for attention, rigidity of time and place have given way to flexible, moveable equipment which lends itself to many purposes and which can be arranged and rearranged to fit the needs of the job to be done. The term "educational wastelands" has been hurled at present day schools by some who feel that education should be concerned solely with the mind. Those of us whose memories go back to childhoods spent in schools which were bleak, dull, and distinctly unchallenging, find ourselves inclined to think of those schools as tragically wasteful of much that we now consider most important and most precious in human potentiality.

The task of each individual during the years of childhood and youth is the building of the self. Home, school, and community furnish building material in the form of experiences and furnish also stimulation, encouragement, and guidance, but the child does the building. It is because of our increasing understanding of this fact

that the environment with which we surround the child assumes great importance.

A Comfortable, Non-Static Classroom Environment Stimulates Children

An attractive classroom as background for the child's school experience affords him pleasure and certain aesthetic values. A comfortable classroom environment gives him a sense of security and well-being with possible release of energy for purposes beyond just keeping the organism in equilibrium. But a classroom environment can be both attractive and comfortable and still be a passive, static environment which does little or nothing in and of itself to stimulate a child to reach out for experiences which help him to expand and grow. In fact, attractiveness and comfortableness which do nothing to stimulate curiosity, encourage exploration, thinking, and problem solving—which keep the child in a passive, receptive, and vegetative sort of equilibrium—can stand in the way of growth. Intellectual growth is largely a result of finding oneself discontent with the stage in which one is and a consequent reaching out to build a new equilibrium on a higher intellectual level.

Centers of interest, bulletin boards, and display areas in a classroom are of greatest value when they raise prob-

lems that cry out for solution, when they suggest exploration and experimentation, and when they raise questions that need answers. The material for solving the problems, finding answers to the questions and carrying on the suggested exploration must be available without too much frustrating search and labor or the child will put forth some effort and then give up the matter and be almost worse off for his experience. Intellectual curiosity and interest are valuable and rewarding only as the child learns to satisfy them. Curiosity without initiative in finding answers produces no real growth.

An art center can be arranged to suggest a number of types of creative experiences. A science area can provide material for observation and experimentation together with books and materials to turn to for interpretation and for stimulating ideas for further work. An arithmetic center can be set up to encourage exploration with weights and measures and with concrete material for number manipulation and for the solving of problems. Bulletin boards and display spaces for illustrative material in the social studies can suggest areas for further study and intellectual problems for the children to bite their teeth into. The classroom library can be arranged and managed by the children so that they are encouraged to enrich not only themselves but each other through their reading. Space for displaying the interests of parents as well as children provides satisfactions and also reveals to children new possibilities which they can exploit.

Teachers Can Be Resourceful

The values that lie in the physical setting of the classroom and the arrangement and use of materials are largely of the teacher's own making. The teacher is, unquestionably, the most important single element in the child's school environment. She stimulates and guides the growth of each child in a variety of ways. Certainly, the way in which she arranges the learning environment influences each child's curriculum experience. The direct teaching she does through planned lessons is designed to stimulate interest, develop skills as they are needed, and continuously help the child to build inner resources for independent learning and growth.

The teacher's own intellectual interests and enthusiasms are vitally important in stimulating the growth of interests in children. A child's interests are not inherent in himself nor in his learning environment though the potentialities are there. All interests are acquired through experience of one sort or another. Interest and enthusiasm are contagious. A teacher who shares her own interests with children, whenever they are appropriate, will find that children are expanding their interests to keep pace. The teacher's interests and enthusiasms help children to see in all sorts of situations possibilities of which they might otherwise be unaware. They help children also to sense the satisfactions that exist in continuous growth and expansion. Overstreet has said that a mature individual is one who is forever matur-

ing—who never reaches the end of the line but is forever moving forward in the direction of greater maturity.

Teachers Need to Expand and Deepen Eagerness to Learn

All teachers mean to expand and deepen children's eagerness to learn yet all too many of them actually do just the opposite. They underestimate the drive to learn which exists within children—at least some children. They are like the teacher who said to the girl who was delving into far more material than was necessary for the assignment, "Why do you do all of that when it isn't necessary?" The child answered, "I know, but don't you just like to feel your brain cells crackle?" A child who is an eager learner does like to get at the root of things, not just to find surface answers. Such children are utterly bored with much of the routine workbook and practice work that is assigned to them. They like to bite into really challenging problems and find ways to solve them. Even children of lesser ability with less zest for learning might break through their lethargy and become active seekers after knowledge and understanding, according to their individual levels of ability, if they had inspired leadership.

All teachers mean to help children learn to think and reason on ever higher levels. Yet all too often adherence to the plans the teacher has made in advance or the seeming pressure of "requirements" causes teachers to cut off thinking. "Never mind that now; get on your work" or "We haven't time for that question now" puts the child off the track of his intellectual

concern and dulls his interest to the point that the "now" never comes when he follows it through. Perhaps such children need to be encouraged to lay aside the group task while they follow through on the interest they have expressed and report back to the group, getting later whatever necessary values there may have been in the assignment by listening and participating while the other children check and evaluate their results.

Open-Ended Questions Are Vital

More of the questions that are raised in the classroom need to be open-ended questions, answers to which cannot be completely rounded out and put away in pigeon holes. Children need to be guided to see that no vital question is ever fully answered. There is always more to learn than appears on the surface at the moment. Life tomorrow may make some of today's answers unsatisfactory, inadequate, or even unworkable. Lincoln Steffens, the famous journalist, wrote years ago of a practice he carried on with his son. Whenever a faucet leaked or anything about the home went awry, he called his son to say to him in effect, "See, here is something for you to do. Nobody yet has invented a faucet that won't leak (or perhaps, a lawnmower blade that will cut the wiry grass, an awning fabric that will not fade, or a means of doing something that is more economical of time and labor). There is so much yet to be done that there are uses for all of the energy, intelligence, and initiative you have. The world needs all of it." It is inspiring to think what man,

the world over, might achieve if each child could grow up with that concept firmly imbedded in his mind.

The better programs on television and radio broaden children's knowledge—a fact which is good. But they present a danger as well—the danger that children will be satisfied with snatches of knowledge, brief surface glimpses, and content to say, "I know about that. I saw it on television." Unless we help them, they may fail to realize how small a segment they have encountered, how little they really know, and how dangerous that little may be if it is out of perspective with the total situation.

Children must be helped to see and accept the fact that the human mind never attains its full potential growth—that the mind is in a continuous state of growth—the more one knows, the more there is to know. Tennyson had this in mind in his poem, *Ulysses*, when he said, "All experience is an arch wherethro' gleams an untravell'd world, whose margin fades for ever and for ever when I move."

Teachers Need to Know Available Resources

To do all of this, teachers need to know the resources that are available in children's books as well as the resources available in the community—the human resources that can be drawn upon and the resources for observation, study, and experience that are available through museums, industries, and agencies. Children's books are available in tremendous numbers, on all manner of topics and in all manner of styles of writing. Modern schools in this country and in England

are making the building of libraries of children's books one of their main concerns at the present time. On visits to English schools, one of the resources pointed out with pride by many headmasters and headmistresses is the little library which they are eagerly expanding. Some of these libraries contain more of the good trade or story books published in this country than are found in many of our own schools. English educators appear to realize more clearly than do many teachers in this country that textbooks alone do not provide adequate education for children. A major task of every school is to make readers of children—not just people who *can* read but people who *do read*.

Children's interests and needs vary as completely as the children vary in appearance and in the home backgrounds from which they come. A large part of the task of creating a challenging environment for a child is concerned with studying him—his ways of thinking and responding and his interests and needs. The better the teacher knows a child the more successful she can be in providing the right kind of stimulation and guidance at the right time. There is an increasing number of books which can be used to meet emotional needs and can help children, who do not have in their own lives the problems with which the book deals, understand and appreciate those who do face special, personal problems. *Windows for Rosemary* helps children understand a child, born blind, who learns to live happily with sighted people. *Blue Willow* helps children from secure homes

understand the insecurity and the longing of the migrant child. The possibilities today are almost limitless but the teacher must know them and have a clear sense of psychological timing to help children gain in appreciation and understanding of people who differ from themselves.

Techniques for Using Resource Materials Need to Be Taught

Children have to be taught techniques for using resource material so that they can use the resources for independent learning. Special programs for gifted children give attention to helping children learn how to learn through the use of reference material, the library, personal interviews, and any other available resource. More of this could be done in almost any classroom, anywhere. Children need to be made clearly aware of the fact that learning is not a function of schooling only, but a function of life itself.

Human relationships provide a large part of the challenge in any classroom environment. The teacher's relationships with children are important but so are children's relationships with one another. Young children in most primary classrooms are given time and opportunity for sharing their out-of-school experiences and interests as well as the individual and group interests within the classroom. Older children need time for this sort of sharing but most of their sharing can be on a considerably higher intellectual plane. They can be encouraged to develop individual hobbies and long term interests which can be shared with the group from

time to time. Under the teacher's guidance, they can bring items of interest from their reading, their television viewing, and their individual research and exploration. Many items of current news from newspapers, magazines, and television are of limited value unless the reporter or the group takes time to build background. The conflicts of interest on the island of Cyprus or on the Israel-Jordan border mean little unless the children look into the matters of geographical location, historical background, and cultural differences that are operating. News of the Suez crisis means little unless the children take time to build some background for it and fit it into its setting. Helping children see the need for more understanding is the teacher's task—the children may not see deeply enough into the situation to know what they need for understanding. And surface awareness without desire for understanding has little educational value.

There Must Be Interaction

There must be time in any classroom for children to mingle with each other, to share interests individually and informally, and, as one first-grade teacher realized, to browse among the stimulating materials she had provided. Children do not come with ready-made purposes. They must develop them, as adults do, through roaming among areas of possibility, seeing what others are doing, trying a bit of this and a bit of that until an interest takes hold which the child wants to pursue further. Teachers can help children find their interests and

pursue them but the real drive must come, in the last analysis, from within the child.

A challenging environment is in part physical and material, to be sure,

but it is mainly psychological and inspirational; it is the social, emotional, and intellectual challenge that counts and everything in the environment is built to that end.

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The Teacher's First Step: Discovering and Planning for Individual Needs in Reading

by ROBERT E. MARTIN

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SINCE THE PUBLIC often views the role of the school more or less in terms of reading achievement, the teacher is apt in her over-anxiety to seek to produce successful readers at almost any cost. This is evidenced in many places not only by the inordinate proportion of the school day being spent on directed reading experiences, but also by the expressed concern on the part of teachers for high achievement in the area of reading. Grade placement and promotion, success and failure, are more often determined on the basis of the child's reading level than on any other aspect of growth and development.

The school has the primary responsibility for a child's learning to read. The job of the teacher is to help children gain the competencies essential for successful living. Reading in our culture is surely one of these competencies. As such, reading is important. It is a tool, a skill to be used and

enjoyed, rather than just a subject to be taught and learned.

It is possible, however, that over-concern for a specific competency particularly at the primary level can well, in many cases, defeat that very purpose we are trying to achieve. Placing so much value on early reading and rapid advancement (at least commensurate with the grade levels as established by national norms) is so unrealistic in terms of individual children that, for some, discouragement sets in early and accumulates to a degree that feelings of self-satisfaction, so necessary for progress in any area, are unattainable.

Scientific Research Should Point the Way

During the past several decades there has been a great deal learned about individual differences. There is an abundance of scientific research to show that to expect children to reach a certain achievement at certain ages

is as unreasonable as to expect them all to start talking, walking, or cutting their teeth at the average age for these physiological developments. It has been pointed out that it would be just as false to grade or classify them on the basis of their heights or weights. The same principle applies all through a child's school life, not only during the time that he is first introduced to reading. We do know the average height and weight of a nine-year-old, but we also accept without alarm the wide range in heights and weights that exists. Reading norms are also based on averages but somehow, through misinterpretations of their meaning, they have become rigid standards and even goals for some teachers. It is unfortunate that practice often ignores the conclusive data which demonstrate the wide range of individual abilities, achievements, experiences, and interests existing in any group of children at any chronological age. These individual differences first become significant to teachers in kindergarten and first grade with the introduction of reading-readiness materials.

There also exists a great diversity in rate of learning and achievement that is quite generally ignored by practice. A much greater range should be expected in any group after five or six years of school experience. The better the teaching, the richer the program, the more children are encouraged to progress at their own rate, the greater should become the range in achievement. In almost any sixth grade, for example, despite all the efforts to maintain grade standards, there can

be found through testing, a reading achievement range from second or third grade to tenth, eleventh, or even twelfth grade.

Grouping Must Be Kept Flexible

The practical problem that teachers face under these conditions is one of providing for this wide range of abilities. Grouping has been the most common method of attack upon this problem. It is quite possible, however, that this is not the answer. In the first place, it is most difficult through testing to establish accurately a child's true reading ability and achievement. We lack reliable objective tests which will reveal how well a child can read in areas where his interest is high. In the second place, the kinds of graded materials that are commonly used are not always the most appropriate, since they often have little regard for the varied interests of the boys and girls. In other words, judgment of ability is often based upon achievement without regard for interest. In the third place, no matter what method we use for grouping according to ability, children are not fooled. Those who are in the lower ability group are singled out and stigmatized as lacking ability. This in itself in many cases is enough to block reading achievement more or less permanently. Many teachers who have tried this method have found that as they become aware of the wide differences in individual children, in order to do justice to them they must divide and re-divide these groups until logically they have almost as many groups as they have children. The formation of groups, however, to fur-

ther common interests and to meet current needs is scientifically based. The membership of these groups will necessarily change as new interests emerge and special needs arise.

Then there is the problem of providing for the other subject matter areas, such as history, geography, arithmetic, science, and health. These materials, too, have been very carefully grade placed according to vocabulary norms. In an average sixth grade group, there is the impossible situation of expecting children of low reading ability to accomplish materials written far above them, and the unjust requirement of limiting those with high reading achievement to materials below their abilities.

Excerpts from a few case studies may help to illustrate the foregoing points:

Donald was a sixth-grade boy with a tested reading achievement of 2.4. He seemed completely unable to read or understand any of the materials furnished him in the various subject areas for his grade. His one consuming interest was birds. He spent much of his out-of-school time tramping through the woods observing birds, collecting nests, and studying their habits. He owned the Audubon bird books and seemed able to read and understand them. In fact, he checked out ornithology books from the nearby university library to find out things he wanted to know about his hobby. Yet in his total school experience he was obliged to spend his time most unsuccessfully with the impossible task of acquiring knowledge by the

reading of graded materials that were uninteresting to him.

Jimmy was spending his first year in the sixth grade after three years in the previous grade. According to the teacher it was impossible for him to get much from the classroom activities since he could neither read, write nor figure successfully on that grade level. After school Jimmy worked in his father's garage. He had just finished overhauling an engine of a Ford car. He was completely capable of studying, understanding, and following directions from the automotive mechanics manual. His outside reading consisted of periodicals and books in the fields of mechanics and outdoor life. On weekends he went commercial ice fishing with his grandfather. He stated that on the previous weekend they had caught six hundred pounds of fish for which they had received thirty-five cents a pound. When asked how much that would be, he promptly replied, "About \$200." Being further questioned he said that he arrived at that figure by dividing six hundred by three, "since thirty-five cents is about one-third of a dollar."

Don and Jimmy are admittedly individual cases but they are not uncommon. With a stereotyped and mechanized approach to learning, not many educational opportunities are offered the Donalds and Jimmys. This situation seems to imply a different kind of classroom organization for learning if children are to be provided with full opportunities for success and achievement in relation to their individual growth potential. The same, of course, is true with our exceptionally gifted

boys and girls. They, too, are often obliged to seek their real learning outside of school.

If we really believe what we have been saying for so many years about individual differences among children it is high time we begin not only to discover these differences but by our practices to demonstrate this belief.

**Teacher's First Responsibility
Is to Foster Wholesome Attitudes
Towards Reading**

One of the teacher's first responsibilities in beginning the school year is to build or reinforce a good wholesome attitude toward reading on the part of the children. There is no place for tension, fears or anxiety about reading if we wish to help boys and girls achieve their potential in this area. As has been mentioned, the grade level norms viewed as goals have worked a hardship in the past upon both teachers and pupils. They never were meant to be viewed as anything but averages and certainly not as goals either for individuals or groups of individuals. To say that a child is either retarded or accelerated in terms of these norms is being completely unrealistic. The teacher must know each child, have some concept of his mental, physical, emotional and social maturity and recognize the fact that he has a rate of growth and development which also determines what is successful achievement for him. Time to help develop right attitudes, a feeling of security, a sense of worthiness and adequacy on the part of the pupils is well spent. Some teachers take as many as six weeks at the beginning of the year to establish an

optimal learning atmosphere for more formal reading activities. They provide many opportunities for free discussion of interests and ideas, for creative activities of all kinds in arts and crafts and writing, for story telling and sharing experiences and for the physical arrangement of the classroom to make it an attractive environment for living and learning.

**Teacher Must Get to Know Each
Child as an Individual**

The first days and weeks of a teacher's experience with boys and girls should be spent in getting to know them. To begin by trying to teach someone without knowing him is almost as futile as trying to teach something without knowing about the subject we are attempting to teach. To know and understand the boys and girls we are working with is at least as important as knowing the content.

How does a teacher go about discovering all this information about the children for whom she is responsible. There are some things that can be done by teachers even before the actual classroom activities start. In most schools the cumulative records which follow the children throughout their school experiences are available for study. These include such information as various test scores, grades, reports to parents, samples of work, and anecdotal records; all of which help in learning more about children. Visiting with the former teachers of the individuals is also most helpful in gaining knowledge about them and insight into their needs, interests, abilities, strengths, and weaknesses. Home visits, either before school starts or as

soon as possible at the beginning of the year will help teachers not only to learn more about the individual, his background, and the attitudes and values of the parents, but also give teachers a deeper understanding of the cultural and neighborhood influences.

The teacher must determine the level at which each child can read comfortably and operate with assurance to achieve his needs and desires, both in reading for information and enjoyment. Reading tests are important in diagnosis but not sufficient in terms of individual children. An observant teacher may well determine with reasonable accuracy the level of a child's reading by his choice of materials in situations where he is free to choose from a wide selection of interesting attractive materials. Here, too, is the opportunity to find out more about his real interests and concerns.

Interests of Children Must Be Discovered

In order to discover the interests of the boys and girls at the beginning of the school year—before we become so concerned with the directed teaching of reading—it may be well to find out what he has been doing on his own during the summer months. As an example, last summer in our neighborhood about twelve boys from ages seven to thirteen became almost obsessed with the collection of butterflies and moths. The amount of reading material they collected on their own, both from the libraries and by purchase with their allowances from the

bookstore, was almost unbelievable. Their common interest resolved any of the difficulties we usually anticipate in our formal school classroom arising from a wide range in chronological age, physical size, mental ability, and reading achievement. It was a wonderful demonstration of how reading is used as a tool (a cliché often heard but not nearly so often observed in practice). It seems reasonable that the teachers could have capitalized on this interest that so stimulated these boys. Upon investigation, however, I have been unable to find a case where any one of the boys has been able to carry this project on into the school activities. Whether or not the teachers are aware of what happened, I do not know, but it seems rather important that ways to discover these interests must be found if we really wish to capitalize upon them to enrich our reading program.

Total Developmental Aspects of Children Must Be Known

Teachers generally are seeking more and more information about the boys and girls with whom they are dealing. They are no longer satisfied with only the objective test results, but are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of such factors as the family relationships, culture backgrounds, inter-personal relations, attitudes and values of the individual. The professional teacher is becoming convinced that the traditional approach that offers the same diet for all appetites—appetites which differ widely both in degree and kind—cannot be defended.

Organizing Reading in The Primary Grades

by ALTHEA BEERY

● SUPERVISOR OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION
CINCINNATI PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dear Carol:

How gratifying that you find working with young children exciting and all that you hoped teaching would be. You have learned a great deal about your class as a group and as individuals. You know the kinds of experiences they have had and the interests which they wish to satisfy through reading—and otherwise. For a beginning teacher to identify so quickly a superior boy like Charles is no small feat. Your plan to let him read on his own in astronomy is good, as is the way you are planning for him to use his ability in helping the class find answers to their questions.

What Conditions Promote Reading Growth?

It is natural that you feel the need of help in organizing your reading. Most teachers do. Nobody can give you a blueprint to follow blindly, but perhaps a look at the conditions most favorable for growth in reading will be helpful.

A Positive Attitude Toward Reading

With the rapport you describe, it will not be difficult to discover each child's attitude toward learning to read. Does he examine news items on the bulletin board and new books with genuine interest? Does he feel confident about his ability to learn to read? Does he go to books for infor-

mation? Whatever you can do to build the child's self-respect and his conviction that printed matter is important will pay big dividends.

Appropriate Reading Materials

Aren't primary readers colorful and trade books attractive? Survey the reading materials available to you, not only basic texts but supplementary ones and single library books. Of course, you'll examine the books in your own classroom, but don't stop there. Your school may have a central storage place for additional partial sets of readers and library copies. If you have a library in your school, consult the librarian. If not, the nearest public library may make collections available to you. Fortunately, most teachers today share freely; just the books you need may be reposing unused in the next classroom. Home libraries offer possibilities, but word your request carefully so that the books you receive are appropriate.

Time to Read

Within limits, the more reading children do the better readers they become. This means that the periods when you help children develop reading skills will be spent largely in reading rather than in talking about reading. Can you make it easy and desirable for children to read from library books at free times during the day?

At your first meeting with parents you might encourage them to help their children plan "a time for reading" from their own library books.

An Orderly Plan

Some children seem almost to teach themselves to read, but, as you know, a planned program is essential if every child is to realize his reading potential. In your planning consider the following points.

Clear-cut goals. Your letter shows that you have carefully studied the children's records in reading and have a good picture of where each child is in reading. This study helps you set immediate goals for your program, but balance these with long-range ones—reading as a tool for learning, as a means of self-realization and personal enrichment. With ultimate goals in mind it will be easier to place day-by-day plans in perspective. Try to mesh your goals with the children's purposes so that you and they are working together.

Reading groups. As a result of this study of your children and their present achievement in reading, think through which children can work together profitably in reading. Tentatively set up working groups. These may well vary for different phases of the program. For example, you may decide that the children need to do more independent reading and get more fun out of it. They may lack acquaintance with "books too good to miss." To spark your literature and personal reading program, you may use a combination of individual reading, class listening as you tell about

and read from library books, and informal sharing times in small groups.

Keep the groups that meet regularly with you for basic reading instruction somewhat flexible and as free as possible from competitive pressure. Visits of children to other reading groups and your evident faith that each child can and will improve in reading will help each child adjust to his reading group.

Scheduling. You are probably saying to yourself: I've planned which children should read together; I've selected books that will be fresh, interesting, and not too difficult; and I know roughly what goals to work for, but how can I possibly find time to get it all within the school day, not to mention other things besides reading? There is no easy answer, but it will help if you block out the school day in relatively long periods for related activities. You and your children will then be able to move from one task to another as plans for a particular day emerge. Children need the security that an established program gives them. The departure from the regular schedule that excursions or programs for parents bring will offer variety and add spice to living at school.

Scheduling reading is broader than merely providing for regular reading periods in a basic reader, as you know. Children need time to locate information related to class units and to do personal reading. As your co-worker in the first grade says, even while children are taking the first steps in reading, they need to use reading to further their purposes.

Guidance. Don't forget that you are the most important ingredient in this recipe for producing good readers. What you do and say—the way you introduce a new story, help children learn to work out new words, encourage them to think about what they read—makes all the difference. Teaching reading is a *professional* job. Read any published material your school system has prepared, and know what the manuals that accompany your readers suggest. With more experience, you will develop techniques that work well for you. In the meantime, use all the resources available to you thoughtfully, not slavishly. A personal word of advice is to pace your teaching for both security and challenge. How to adapt class and group guidance to the needs of individuals involves skills you will spend your professional life perfecting. With a friendly atmosphere, basic understanding of children, and a general knowledge of how reading skills develop, however, you need not worry about mistakes in teaching; your general direction can't help but be forward.

Independent Activities. Like most beginning teachers, Carol, you have indicated that planning for children when they are working without your direct guidance is a big problem. It will help if you never assign tasks for which children are not ready. Time spent early in the year in helping the class establish "ground rules" and evaluate how they are working will prove helpful. Ways of performing tasks that are the outgrowth of a reading selection can be demonstrated in

the group and checked the next time the group meets. Sometimes placing work pages on a particular story in a booklet to take home dignifies the children's work. (Be sure that parents can understand what the child was to do on any papers taken home.) A wise choice of activities to pursue after assigned tasks are finished will keep able children from dawdling. Children can explore individual interests or do committee work.

Some of the independent work time will be spent on reading tasks or in personal reading, but children should have much opportunity to use a variety of materials for self-expression and to further class enterprises. Lettering signs for a classroom post office, potting plants for a Mother's Day gift, making curtains or chair backs for the library corner are only a few examples. It goes without saying that for such activities to be purposeful children must have a part in the planning.

Here's a list that may help you check on independent work periods.

- Is the task assigned worth doing?
- Do the children understand what they are to do and why?
- Is the emphasis on learning rather than grading?
- Do the periods provide a desirable range of activities without interfering with the group working with you?
- Are materials ready and the room arranged so that children can move about without disturbing each other?

- Do children evaluate what has been accomplished and make plans to improve any poor work habits?

How Broad a Program?

It was good to note in your letter, Carol, that you viewed the teaching of reading so broadly. Maybe it would be helpful to look briefly at the major phases.

First, comes the basic program in which you help children learn how to read. As you say, it is an important part of your teaching job. Next year's teacher will be helped by records that show the sequence of books which children read under your guidance and the major skills developed. Your second graders should make strides this year in comprehending and in reacting thoughtfully to the ideas they read. Certainly they should learn how to work out many new words for themselves as you help them identify sounds in familiar words, using them in analyzing new words, and help them notice how endings change words.

Perhaps functional reading is a good label for the reading children do in connection with classroom living and class enterprises. They will find many occasions to read bulletin board announcements, class plans, invitations, and informational charts. Personally, I would place any texts children use in arithmetic or science in this category. They involve reading to learn rather than merely learning to read. You may find, in time, that much of your program can be built around the real uses children have for reading.

Primary children appreciate much that is fine in literature before they are able to read it. Many well-written books, however, are simple enough for children to read on their own. The best in juvenile literature is the child's birthright, wouldn't you agree? Some of us see this part of the reading program merged with what we call personal reading. As early as possible, children should learn to find joy in independent reading. No line should be drawn discrediting the child who devours a book about dinosaurs rather than a book of fairy tales. Broadening the types of books children enjoy begins with you but extends over all the years of growing up. You have a special responsibility to see that the range of difficulty in books available to your children meets the needs of both the ablest and the poorest reader.

A Final Word

A classroom filled with children's interests and children's enterprises is the ideal place for learning to read. Children get more from books because they take more to them. They read more purposefully for they expect to use what they find in books. You wouldn't limit, even if you could, children's learning to reading. Observation, excursions, experiments, constructions, dramatizations, discussions are natural ways for children to explore their world and are easier to use, perhaps, than the new tool of reading. Weave them together for best results.

Never forget, Carol, that reading is part of language. At this age the understanding of spoken language out-

strips the understanding of the printed page. Meanings of new words, the communication of ideas to others, the understanding of what a sentence is or the correct form in usage develop first in conversation and discussions. Your children are beginning to put ideas on paper and need guidance in handwriting and spelling, but see that you put no permanent barrier between one part of language and another. Your description of the plans your children made for sharing summer trips is proof enough that you under-

stand how all the language arts and indeed every subject will be used by children as they learn together.

Thank you for the inspiration your letter gave me. Of course, you will grow professionally, Carol, but right now you are good for children. Your enthusiasm and your questing spirit make you a competent guide for children and a valued confidante for their parents.

Affectionately yours,

A FELLOW TEACHER

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Organizing Reading in The Middle Grades

by EDNA L. STERLING

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ALICE SIMONDET

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Qualities of a Good Reading Program

If a line could be drawn to separate primary from middle-grade reading, and if another line could separate middle-grade from advanced reading, the lines would be neither straight nor parallel. Neither in the field of reading, nor in any other phase of children's learning, can a clean swathe be labelled "Middle-Grade." Reading teachers know that in the middle grades there are children who need continued instruction in primary reading skills; there are those who are ready for the advanced reading materials and skills of junior high school;

and there are those who need help in bridging the gap between the stages of beginning reading and the story-type material of primary grades to the more difficult and varied reading content of upper grades.

A skillful teacher varies the approaches and techniques of teaching reading according to the needs of individuals within his classes. A teacher of reading, regardless of the grade level or of the ability of the children, may employ some of the following procedures in organizing a classroom for effective reading instruction:

- A teacher may study the personnel folders of his pupils and

record information that will help him understand the needs of the children who will make up his classroom.

- He may observe the children in a variety of activities and make mental notes of traits or reactions that seem significant.
- He may analyze standardized reading test scores.
- He may give informal check tests in oral reading to determine reading level and strengths and weaknesses of each individual. He avoids uneasiness or embarrassment for the child by hearing the child read orally in private conference.
- The teacher then groups children for instruction according to the discovered reading needs. The teacher finds that as a rule the needs of children are much too widespread to give all children the same instruction at the same time.

Kinds of Materials

In order to provide adequate reading materials for a middle-grade classroom, basal readers of various levels are essential. Encyclopedias, dictionaries, reference books, and an abundance of library books varying in reading difficulty and interest appeal are also necessary. Children's magazines and newspapers, pamphlets, and bulletins supply informational and story-type material of value to children. The teacher uses adequate chalkboard and bulletin board space constantly in the teaching of reading. Ruled butcher paper and a felt brush pen are desir-

able for making charts to record group experiences, for listing steps in certain procedures such as note-taking or dictionary usage, and for developing vocabulary lists.

Main Goals of the Middle-Grade Reading Program

While it is unrealistic to specify certain well-defined goals to be reached exclusively in middle grades, there are some which are attainable by a large number of middle-grade children. The following are probably the main responsibilities of the middle-grade teacher:

- To develop in each child the desire to read. It is not enough to teach children how to read. This is the age when children become readers. They learn to turn to books as naturally as they seek play or food.
- To teach pupils new skills for reading ever increasingly difficult material. Handling the longer and more complicated material requires new abilities and the refinement of previously acquired skills. For instance, readers should become functionally familiar with the way books are structured. It is not enough to show the parts of a book to children. They must be taught many times with many types of books how tables of content, indices, cross references, captions, chapter divisions and subdivisions, italics, and bold-face type can be of service to them as readers.
- To develop in the children helpful word-attack skills. Work be-

gun in primary grades in phonetics and word structure is carried on into more advanced stages. Syllabication is taught. With good teaching, recognition of long words through identification of roots, prefixes, and suffixes becomes automatic. Lessons in the use of the dictionary introduce new kinds of words: "synonyms" for words that mean the same; "antonyms" for words of opposite meanings, and "homonyms" for words that are pronounced the same but have unlike meanings and/or spellings. In teaching dictionary usage, it is necessary that each child be able not only to recite the alphabet, but to be so thoroughly familiar with it that when he hears a letter named, he immediately knows its relative position in the alphabet. He must be taught the use of guide words, the functions of the dictionary for spelling, pronunciation, meanings, parts of speech, and ways of selecting the proper definition to fit the meaning of a word in context.

- To aid children in developing new thought patterns. They need to be taught to think in relation to time, place, and space. Making comparisons with familiar times, places, and distances helps to develop the new concepts.
- To encourage children to think critically about what they read. Simple guide questions, such as the following, can help them evaluate reading material:
 - a. What is the copyright date? Of what importance is it to the reliability of the article?
 - (1) Was the article true when it was written?
 - (2) Is it true now?
 - (3) Is it likely to be true in the future?
 - b. Who wrote the article? Was he, and is he still, an authority on his subject?
 - c. What is the main idea of the article?
 - d. What facts support the main idea?
 - e. What opinions are stated as facts?
 - f. Are there any misrepresentations of facts?
 - g. Are broad generalizations made to cover many specific situations?
 - h. What are your conclusions as to the reliability of the article?
- To cultivate an appreciation of good literature of different kinds. A discriminating sense of values comes slowly and requires skillful direction from a teacher who knows children's books.
- To encourage children to engage in wide reading. It is during this period that they should be introduced to many children's classics. They will need help with some of them. For instance, Pyle's *Robin Hood* is a favorite, particularly with the more skillful readers, once assistance is given with the unfamiliar medieval English expressions. A door into fantasy is opened when chil-

dren are helped with reading a book like *Alice in Wonderland* or *The Wind in the Willows*. Few children can cope alone with *The Wind in the Willows*, but many will have made life-long friends with its characters and will have acquired a keen understanding of human nature if the book is read to them by a sympathetic "older." Teachers enjoy reading aloud to children a wide variety of literature of good quality which is too difficult for them to read by themselves but is of interest to their age level.

- To introduce children to various forms of writing that authors use. Throughout the primary grades children have encountered chiefly fiction or story-type material. In middle grades children can learn how to read non-fiction and play or verse forms. They need to be taught to recognize and to appreciate that factual material may be information, that is, historical, scientific, or biographical, and that fantasy, although not fact, may reveal the *truth*, to witness, *Charlotte's Web*.

An Organized Reading Program

Individual teachers have many successful ways of organizing their reading programs. A reading "lesson" may require several days for completion. Knowing that all children in the room cannot read the same material, teachers usually subdivide the class into flexible groups to meet individual needs. Some groups require more

time on one phase of a lesson than do other groups, but the teacher adjusts the timing and kind of help in each phase according to the needs of the group or of the individuals.

A well-planned lesson, although it may occur over several days, includes such features as the following:

- *Motivating the children.* The teacher takes time to relate the experiences children have had to the new experiences they will meet in the story. He may use maps, globe, pictures, objects, or verbal illustrations to create an interest and a meaningful setting for the children. He remembers to draw out the children rather than to do all the talking himself.
- *Helping with anticipated difficulties.* If a story from a basal reader or a section from a social studies or science text is assigned, the teacher will study the material before he assigns it to the children. He will look for words that may present meaning and/or pronunciation problems. These words will be discussed with the children before the reading assignment is made. A good method is to select phrases from the story which contain the difficult words and to write them on the chalkboard. By studying phrases rather than isolated words, children develop facility in the use of context to build vocabulary, and they acquire skill in the use of word-attack procedures. More important, they learn to read for ideas rather than for words.

• *Setting the purpose for reading.*

Before asking children to read, teachers should be sure that a purpose for reading the passage is set. If the purpose is stated in a question, the question should be broad enough to cover the entire story and to cause the reader to put two and two together in answering the question. Factual type questions that can be answered with *Yes* or *No* or with one or two details from the story are of little value. The question should cause a child to think, to reflect, and to support his answer. Questions such as the following may be written on the chalkboard to help children direct their reading:

- a. What incidents do you think influenced Tom to act as he did during the race? How would you have acted under similar circumstances?
- b. In what ways was Janey's life like yours? What advantages do you have over Janey? What advantages did she have over you?

Sometimes the purpose is set by the teacher, and sometimes teachers and pupils together evolve the purpose.

- *Giving children an opportunity to read silently.* After children have a purpose for reading, they need time to read silently. While one group reads, another may be receiving instruction from the teacher. In a variety of ways, the teacher provides for children

who will finish their reading assignment before others. For example, she may write on the chalkboard something similar to the following:

Be prepared to read aloud parts of the story

- a. That show that Tom was careless. Pages
- b. That show that Tom was clever. Pages
- c. That help you to know at what time of year the story took place. Pages
- d. That make you think the author had firsthand information about alligators. Pages

This type of re-reading requires children to make use of skimming skills, of the power to select parts of the story that answer the question. Not only do the children locate appropriate passages, but they must study them carefully for oral reading. For this work, the only writing the child does is to jot down page numbers so that he can find his selected passage readily. The independent study period is a good time, too, for children to broaden vocabulary. Exercises can be devised to help children become more adept in the use of context clues in establishing the meanings of unfamiliar words which appear in the reading lesson. Organizational skills can be developed also by asking first that children illustrate the main events or ideas in the story and,

later, that they write simple outlines and summaries.

- *Discussing the story.* After the children have read the story silently, the teacher meets with one of the groups perhaps in a semicircle near a chalkboard. They begin the discussion by answering the question set as the purpose for reading. If there are disagreements, all opinions are heard. Children are urged to express their own opinions and to be ready to support them with details from the story. The teacher asks other questions to develop the children's skill in comprehending the story. Children may read parts to prove a point or to share a portion they particularly enjoyed, but only after careful silent re-reading so that listeners can enjoy their reading.

- *Planning follow-up activities.* There are many kinds of worthwhile follow-up activities for a reading lesson. Additional work should grow naturally out of the reading lesson. Worthwhile types of follow-up activities may include experiences such as these:

a. *Dramatizing a story that has been read.* A story developed through conversation lends itself well to a radio-type play. A story with strong action is good for a television-type play.

b. *Reading to another group a story or parts of stories that were particularly enjoyed by the group.* Oral reading situa-

tions always require preparation on the part of the readers and good listening habits on the part of the audience. To encourage better listening, a reader may suggest some points for which the audience listens. He may ask questions so the other pupils will listen for the answer.

- c. *Summarizing a story or article read.* Children may dictate the main events in a story or the main points in a science or social studies article. The teacher records on the chalkboard what the children dictate. Later, children may be asked to work out independently a summary of their own. Sometimes they may illustrate in sequence the main points and then write an explanatory sentence about each illustration.

- d. *Reporting.* Often the curiosity of children is aroused through reading so that they wish to find out more about a certain topic. They dictate questions which the teacher writes on the chalkboard. Together, pupils and teacher decide on ways and means to gather information about their questions and to report their findings to the group.

- e. *Writing original stories or real experiences.* The stories children write may be arranged in book form for the reading table. If selections are well

chosen and if simple editing is done, these booklets furnish interesting reading material for the children.

A well-rounded developmental reading program for middle grades is assured when lessons are designed to

develop work-type skills, facility in a variety of types of reading, and appreciation of good reading. It is in Grades Four, Five, and Six that children become independent readers and derive from reading one of their chief pleasures.

• • •

The "New Deal" in Reading In the Content Fields

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TO READ is to get meaning from printed or written material." This statement has become commonplace in educational thinking and discussion. It is accepted as a truism by most teachers. They recognize that in the content and technical subjects reading is a necessary tool for successful learning. But they do not always teach accordingly. They do not always make full use of opportunities to help children to improve their reading, to get meaning from the printed page.

Learning comes from expanded concepts, from enriched experiences, from acquired meanings. Certainly one big source of concepts, experiences, and meanings is the printed page. The person who cannot read is walled off from a large potential of learning. Books, pamphlets, and periodicals are a large store-house of facts, understandings, and appreciations. For the

teacher of social studies, arithmetic, or science the ability of pupils to read these is paramount. To get meanings from written symbols it is essential that children be able to read.

Over a period of years teachers of the content subjects have passed through two stages in developing a point of view with regard to reading. Many of them are now in a third stage. We might identify these three stages with the characteristic words: subject-matter, cooperation, and reading. The three stages are not mutually exclusive, but for purposes of discussion we will handle them as such. There are varying degrees of progress among teachers in their movement through these stages. As a matter-of-fact far too many are still in the first stage. But the best educational thinking today would ideally have all of them in the third stage.

In times past many teachers of the content subjects have assumed the position of "I am a teacher of arithmetic, social studies, science, or what have you, not a teacher of reading." With this point of view the subject teacher assumed that children coming to him were able, or should have been able, to read the content material of his subject. He planned his assignments accordingly. But more and more he came up with the cry, "These children can't read." It was usually a blanket indictment of children and books without any attempt at analysis of reading difficulties. The books were too difficult and the children couldn't read them. Calmer and more intelligent observation gradually led to stage two.

During this stage the subject teacher felt that cooperation with the reading teacher was important if he was to "teach his subject." This cooperation was carried on in various ways, but basically it resolved itself into giving the reading teacher copies of the material to be read or lists of the difficult words which troubled children. This procedure was an improvement over the first stage in two ways. It reflected a more wholesome attitude on the part of the teacher; it improved the child's skill in reading subject-matter.

But the second stage still exemplified the complete separation of two jobs: The teaching of subject matter and the teaching of reading. The third stage combined the two jobs. It is characterized by the philosophy that every teacher is a teacher of reading. The teacher of reading is a specialist

who develops the basic skills of reading. But every content teacher expands these skills to include the kind of reading peculiar to his field; he helps the pupil to develop the skills necessary to succeed in reading the content of his subject matter. Fortunately more and more teachers of content subjects are accepting the teaching of reading as part of their work. As a result the subject matter is becoming more teachable for them and more interesting for the pupils. The remainder of this article will be devoted to illustrations from social studies and arithmetic to show types of reading instruction needed in those classes.

Reading in the Social Studies

Each content area has a vocabulary peculiar to that area. There are some words and expressions which must be understood if the reader is to get correct meaning from his reading. These words must convey a correct idea to the reader or the whole context lacks meaning.

Such words as *delta*, *atmosphere*, *circumnavigate*, *hemisphere*, *altitude*, *continent*, and *latitude* are examples from geography. These are words which the child needs to know in order to "read geography." But he ordinarily doesn't meet them until they appear in a geography lesson. The wise teacher uses these opportunities to build the vocabulary and the vicarious experiences of children. She spends some time in teaching reading, helping children both to read the words and to understand their meaning.

In history the pupil meets *emancipation, mountain barrier, foreign relations, nullification, privateers*, and a host of others. The printed page is often meaningless unless these specialized words have meaning. In government classes the situation is no different. Such words and phrases as *recall, representative government, primary election, indirect tax, President's Cabinet*, and *negotiations* need to be understood if the reader is to get a correct meaning, or for that matter, any meaning at all from the pages read.

Similar examples from the other social sciences would tell the same story. The teacher of the social studies must be a teacher of reading if he is to teach at all. He needs to recognize that vocabulary development is an important part of his work.

But there is more to reading than recognizing and understanding words. The teacher of social studies needs to help in the development of many specialized skills. The child asked to interpret a complicated statement needs to know how to concentrate on each word and phrase to get the full meaning of the statement. But when he is looking for some information to answer a question, he may need to read several pages hurriedly to find it; he needs to know how to skim. When such situations arise, the social studies teacher becomes a teacher of reading as he helps children to use different types of skills for different situations.

The student of the social studies who reads well reads much more than text material set in type. He reads

maps, charts, graphs, tables, and pictures, too. Knowing how to read these is often equally as important as reading straight type matter. But the skill to read each of them is acquired, and again the teacher needs to help. He needs to take time to help children to read each of them. Reading a map is an essential part of reading in the social studies. Knowing how to read directions, distances, scales, and symbols often makes the difference between understanding and confusion. The same is true of charts, graphs, and tables. Authors include these in books to clarify meanings. But without a knowledge of how to read them they clarify nothing. Similarly, a well-illustrated book adds to understanding. But only if the reader knows how to get meaning from the picture and its caption.

By now the teacher may be ready to ask, "Well, how much time do I devote to the teaching of reading?" There is no arbitrary answer, except "as much as is necessary." Help on specialized vocabulary and development of various skills is of prime importance for improved learning in the social studies. The teacher who recognizes this soon finds that teaching reading becomes a natural part of his total job. As a result teaching is related to the level of children's ability, learning becomes more functional, and the books get "easier." There is less complaint about "the books are too hard" and "children can't read" and more emphasis on "what can be done to help children to read what is necessary for the development of real understandings in the social studies."

Reading Skills Needed in the Arithmetic Class

A successful teacher of arithmetic recognizes the importance of assisting pupils to read technical material purposefully, critically, and analytically. The content of arithmetic deals with the quantitative aspects of life experiences and hence the concepts and terms are those involved in such activities as the following: (1) measurement, (2) buying and selling, (3) banking and investments, (4) insurance, (5) taxation, (6) budgeting.

In early work in measurement pupils need help in understanding and reading the names of standard units in the tables of liquid, dry, and linear measure and in the tables of weight and time. They need to differentiate between measures for areas (square foot, square yard, acres), and measures for volumes (cubic feet, cubic yard). In the measurement of electricity the term kilowatt-hour is important. Terms used to describe the characteristics of plane and solid figures are met when areas and volumes are studied. These terms include *diameter, circumference, altitude, base, rectangular, cylindrical, congruent, similar, hypotenuse, perimeter*, etc.

While many problem situations involving measures are contained in arithmetic textbooks, more practical and realistic problems are often formulated from data contained in price lists in local papers. Consider the following problem stated by Tom, a seventh grade boy, upon reading an advertisement in the paper:

"Linoleum regularly priced at \$3.95 per square yard is on sale at 20%

discount during September. My father wants to put new linoleum on our recreation room floor. The room is 15 ft. by 18 ft. How much can he save by buying the linoleum during the sale?"

The techniques employed by the teacher of arithmetic to develop ability to read material containing measurement terminology include: (1) provision of a wealth of firsthand experiences in using measurement instruments, (2) development of reference measures, (3) practice in estimating lengths, areas, and volumes, (4) utilization of diagrams, scale drawings, and graphs to represent relationships. The concept of a reference measure may need explanation. In Grades 4 and 5 the height of the classroom door—usually 7 feet—becomes a reference measure for judging heights; a measured distance 1 mile from the school becomes a reference measure for estimating distances in miles.

Many arithmetic problems develop from situations dealing with the wise selection, purchase, and payment for goods and services. Correct interpretation and solution of such problems requires the ability to read and understand such terms as the following: *cash payment or installment plan, down payment, balance, carrying charge, rate of interest, discount, mortgage, land contract, annual, semi-annual*.

Solution of problems dealing with insurance requires the ability to read and interpret correctly these terms: *risk, premium, endowment, liability,*

compensation, group insurance policy, and many others. For each of the other applications of mathematics to business and industry we find a specialized vocabulary which must be developed.

Methods utilized by teachers to develop an understanding of terms associated with the social topics of mathematics include dramatization of business procedures, audio-visual aids (films, film-strips, posters, etc.), interviews, discussion, and visits to the community.

The teacher of arithmetic finds it necessary also to help pupils to read explanations of computational procedures and to read specific directions

in the arithmetic text. This type of reading involves a vocabulary limited almost exclusively to the text, but without it the pupils are greatly handicapped in independent study. Illustrations of this specialized vocabulary are the following: *product, factors, dividend, addends, teen-numbers, place-holder, proper and improper fractions, common denominators, numerators.*

From the illustrations discussed above it is evident that the effective teacher of arithmetic must assume the responsibility for the teaching of reading skills needed for success in problem solving and for the efficient use of the textbook.

• • •

Challenges Facing Teacher of Reading

Continued from page 70

gram. Experience will then be gained that will enable her to spread the program to other areas in the years to come.

And now this article will have to come to a close, not because there are no other challenging problems that will face the reading teacher in 1957,

but because there are other articles which demand a place in this magazine. May THE READING TEACHER continue to deal as effectively with the challenging problems that face the reading teacher in the future as it has done in the past. The teachers of America are winning the race against ignorance by teaching the child to read better decade by decade and year by year.

Guiding Reading in Science

by ALICE SIEMONS,

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THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES children live in a physical environment which invites their exploration. Each time they watch a cloud, examine an insect, or push a doorbell children are having a science experience. Increasingly, experiences with the physical environment are being included in the school program. Such provision has been made not only through recognition of the importance of science but through the efforts of thousands of children who have literally brought the physical environment into the classroom.

Children are motivated by their interest and curiosity to include science in their program. They are the pollywog hunters, the rock collectors, the star-gazers. Their purposes have been formalized by educators into four commonly recognized objectives for the science program. They are to help children (1) develop concepts which will aid them in interpreting their environment, (2) grow in their ability to solve problems, (3) develop a scientific attitude, and (4) develop interest in and appreciation for the world.

Various approaches are used to realize these objectives. Firsthand experiences with the physical environment are valued as a primary source of information. Here observation and experimentation serve major roles. Desirable as these approaches are, they are not the only ways of develop-

ing science understandings. Vicarious experiences gained through audio-visual materials and through reading enrich children's understandings and appreciations. Further, they serve as efficient tools in solving problems and in contributing to scientific attitudes.

The Role of Reading in the Science Program

Reading is a primary source of valid information. It may serve children's purposes in the science program through helping them secure information to solve a problem, gather data on which to base a judgment, collect information on problems which cannot be answered through experimentation or observation, check conclusions needing verification, find directions for experiments and construction activities, increase general information, and identify new problems for study.

The implication of these purposes is clear: reading in science is essentially for solving problems. The child should have opportunity to assume the role of the scientific investigator and to use reading as a scientist uses it. This involves the ability to define purposes for reading, to locate pertinent information, to select ideas important to the problem, to evaluate the validity and adequacy of information, to comprehend and organize ideas, and to reach valid conclusions. Clearly, the reading of science materials in problem-solving situations calls

for the development of important reading abilities.

Implications for the Teacher of Elementary School Science

The elementary school teacher is charged with guiding children in all curriculum areas, each of which makes certain unique demands on children's reading abilities. Science is no exception. Among difficulties recognized in science materials are a highly specialized vocabulary and concepts for which written explanations are often difficult and abstract. The imperative need for careful guidance for the developmental reading program has been established. Provision for such help in the content areas has not always been practiced to the same extent. It has been assumed that reading abilities practiced during the reading period developed all the understandings and skills needed by children to read effectively in the content areas. Such is not the case. (3:237) What then is the nature of the guidance needed to assure that children will develop the needed skills and understandings?

Growth in Reading Through the Whole School Program

Careful analyses of the study skills and abilities needed for work-type reading have been developed. Russell (6:225-226) has submitted a widely quoted list which includes the abilities suggested earlier in this article as basic to reading science materials. Certain assumptions underlie planning for the development of the needed abilities: (1) The development of the skills is a continuous process which includes the elementary and extends into the high

school and college years. (2) Teachers on all levels should provide a rich curriculum which stimulates reading for a wide variety of purposes and which leads to broad use of the needed skills. (3) In general each skill or the readiness for it is developed in the primary grades and extended in later grades. (4) None of the skills is developed during any one school year. (5) The skills are developed through a whole curriculum approach rather than through the developmental reading program alone.

While it has been established that reading science materials is characterized by certain unique problems, there is evidence that reading skills developed in any one area tend to be helpful to the child as he reads in other areas. The teacher need not approach reading in each curriculum area as though the skills needed are entirely different. Swenson (7:87) reports that general reading materials and science materials are more similar than dissimilar. Artley (1:472) indicates that the social studies teacher who develops effectively the skills essential to adequate comprehension in his area probably will note a general improvement in other content fields. Since the elementary school teacher's responsibility involves all areas, his task is that of providing an over-all program which includes not only a sound developmental program but well-organized guidance for reading in the content fields including science.

Growth in Reading Science Materials

Various means may be used to ascertain the children's abilities to read

science materials efficiently. Appraisal may be made through appropriate standardized tests. Through individual conferences science interests may be discovered. Children's understanding of terms may be sampled and questions related to science aims and objectives may be used to check reading comprehension. Based on the information gathered, decisions may be made regarding selection of materials, interest groupings to be formed, and reading skills to be developed.

Selecting reading materials in science. Because the work of the young scientist is solving problems, he should consult a variety of materials. A single science textbook will not suffice if we are to realize the objectives of the science program and give practice in the use of needed reading skills. Not only is this approach good science instruction but it is good reading instruction. Individual interests and needs may be met. Skills needed in locating, selecting, evaluating, and organizing information may be used in functional situations.

Consideration of the nature of reading materials in science is pertinent. Dolch (2:137) in pointing out the relationship between the difficulty of a selection and its fact burden indicates that as the fact burden in science books decreased, the material became more story-like. LaBrant (4:78) objects to the story approach by questioning whether children can be taught where to look for key sentences, how to follow a thought, and other supposedly basic reading abilities. There is evidence that science materials are frequently too difficult, however.

Materials should be selected according to the purposes of the science program and the readability of the material. Williams (8) establishes objective criteria concerning subject matter, method of treatment, reading difficulty and style and reports that children prefer books which use a factual approach rather than a narrative one and present content in a direct manner rather than in essay form. Thus, the children themselves seem to prefer the types of science materials which more nearly approximate the kind of thinking a scientist does and serve the purposes of the reading program best.

Meeting vocabulary needs in science materials. The vocabulary difficulties in elementary science materials are directly related to the concepts to be developed. Both are complex. The best approach to both is through the enrichment of the experiences of children in relation to both words and ideas. Meaning may be developed by building background through sharing information, providing direct experiences both in and out of the classroom, and through using pictures, diagrams, films, filmstrips, television and radio.

For direct teaching of terms several guidelines are helpful: (1) Select materials which are simpler than the current basic reader the child is reading. (2) Use the words to be learned in the discussions children have for planning and sharing and begin to establish a word list. (3) Present the new words in sentences in which the context will give clues to their meaning. (4) Explain terms to the class according to their level of understanding. (5) Plan short, frequent periods for

word study and relate them to the work in progress. (6) Develop pupil-made materials such as charts and picture dictionaries. (7) Use the dictionary after the third grade. (8) Provide direct help with word recognition skills: picture clues, context clues, word form clues, structural analysis, and phonetic analysis.

Meeting comprehension needs in science. The suggestions made for developing meaning in relation to science terms also apply to the development of comprehension. Certain other suggestions may be made. Perhaps the most significant is that of helping children adjust their reading according to the purposes for which they are reading. Gray (3:247) indicates that if the teacher will help children develop a clear understanding of what is expected of them in the different kinds of study activities, they will not only acquire skill in dealing with specific situations but will be able to adjust their reading and study procedures intelligently to many different purposes.

Of particular significance to the problem of developing comprehension is the ability to select and evaluate information. The skills involved here are difficult and call for maturity in reading abilities. Through careful guidance the child may be aided to do the kind of thinking in relation to his reading which will make it possible for him to evaluate critically. McCallister (5:132-133) suggests that competence in reading may be improved when it is recognized as an essential element in the promotion of the types of thinking demanded in learning sci-

ence. He draws a parallel between the study of science as a means of promoting the ability to think scientifically and the skills involved in reading with understanding such as being guided by definite purposes, basing judgment on fact, distinguishing between fact and theory, making inferences, and evaluating data critically. Indeed, these are the skills basic to creative reading.

Drawing conclusions calls for careful analytical reading which involves noting all important concepts, re-reading at times, and thinking through relationships in order to reach a generalization. Very careful analytical reading must also be done when children are reading directions for an experiment in order to organize the sequential order of steps. Errors in this type of reading are immediately apparent when the child fails to perform the experiment according to directions.

Children may be said to have made growth in reading when they are able to adjust their method of reading to their purposes and the type of material read. Knowing when to skim or to read analytically, to read rapidly or closely, to get the general significance or to master details, to read orally or silently; when to infer, to reflect, to evaluate—these are the hallmarks of an efficient reader. Carefully guided reading of science materials can contribute to these skills immeasurably, just as they in turn can contribute immeasurably to the realization of the objectives of the elementary science program.

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Techniques for Diagnosing Reading Difficulties

by REXFORD W. BOLLING

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A SURGEON RARELY CUTS into living tissue without being sure that his diagnosis of the difficulty has been thoroughly substantiated. It is sad but true that some reading clinics feel qualified to mold their client's personal lives without the same precautions.

Reading clinic reports indicate a willingness to me to accept the *first* of the possible causes as the one parent cause of any reading difficulty. Researchers repeatedly warn that reading retardation is usually due to a number of causes and that no one difficulty may be interpreted as being all-important. Yet, many of the clinic reports that reach my desk give one cause for such aberrations and neglect *even to consider* other possible causes.

If we are to help a child to read, we must determine, as completely as we can, the *multiple causation* behind his difficulty. What are these causes? Probably no list can ever be complete, but the list presented below, represents the results of research and experience at the Reading Clinic at Arizona State College in Tempe, Arizona.

1. Physiological Factors

Visual: According to the results of visual tests given at the Arizona State College Reading Clinic, a full 90 per cent of the clients are in need of some form of visual attention. This is not to say that all these subjects need correction or exercises, but indicate some

visual difficulty as diagnosed by the technique described below. This percentage includes all the educational levels studied, from the first grade to the graduate level in college. Careful attention must be given this factor, for without efficient vision, a child must expend his energies needlessly in order to read well. Since the Snellen chart is so limited in its diagnostic functions, it would seem that a combination of tests is better. The following tests were used:

- a. Keystone Telebinocular
- b. Astigmatism Chart
- c. Instrument for testing peripheral vision
- d. American Optical Company's Pseudo-Isochromatic Plates for color blindness.

Auditory: Any modern audiometer operating on a pitch and intensity basis is excellent for testing hearing. A watch test or a voice test seems inadequate for diagnosing this function, the malfunctioning of which has been estimated at 12 per cent of the general population¹ and 7 per cent of the elementary school population.² As in the case of vision, higher percentages than

1 Elstad, L. and Doctor, P.V., "Tubular Statement of American Schools for the Deaf", American Annals of the Deaf. 92: 8-29; 1947.

2 Fiedler, Miriam, "Teacher's Problems with Hard of Hearing Children", Journal of Educational Research. XLII: 617-22; April, 1949.

the average are to be expected in clinic operation, since deafness can be a causal factor in poor reading, i.e., a deaf child cannot hear the words spoken and forms no auditory-word associations.

Speech: Since a speech defect often reflects a history of deafness, study of the speech factor seems desirable from that viewpoint alone. Other speech defects represent a neurological disorder which may be reflected in reading. Eames³ states that speech defects occur six times more frequently among poor readers than among good readers. The majority of studies of this factor indicate some relationship between speech disorders and reading.^{4, 5, 6} Presumably, both stem from the same causes, some of which are psychological and some physiological.

Normalcy of maturation: Studies as early as 1940 have shown significant relationships between reading achievement and normalcy of height, weight, dentures and carpal index. Thus, it would seem that a case history should be considered incomplete without such records. Height and weight charts are

available for clinical use and a dentist's report or simple examination will give an idea of the condition of the teeth. Ossification⁷ rate is probably important as an index to maturation. However, it involves a highly complex procedure for its determination and should probably be included under the following category.

General Physical Condition and History: A report from a doctor incorporating the elements of a general physical examination should be obtained. A list of past illnesses may also be valuable. The general tone of the body seems to be quite important in determining the level of ability to learn at any given age.

2. Psychological Factors

Mental age: While historically it has been assumed that a very high relationship existed between mental age and reading ability, it is now fairly certain that such correlations exist at a rho of $+.50$ or slightly above.⁸ It would appear that while measures of intelligence are advisable in reading problems, they are not all-important. However, some experts maintain a staunch opinion that little can be done for students of very low I.Q. At these lower levels, the problems of association are intensified, making the read-

3 Eames, Thomas, "Incidence of Diseases Among Reading Failures and Non-Failures", *Journal of Pediatrics*, XXXIII: 614-17; November, 1948.

4 Artley, A. Sterl, "A Study of Certain Factors Presumed to be Associated with Reading and Speech Difficulties", *Journal of Speech and Hearing Disorders*, 13: 351-60; December, 1948.

5 Eames, Thomas, "The Relationship of Reading and Speech Difficulties", *Journal of Educational Psychology*, XLI: 51-55; January, 1950.

6 Artley, A. Sterl, "Research Concerning Inter-Relationships Among the Language Arts", *Elementary English*, XXVII: 527-37; December, 1950.

7 Flory, C. O., "Osseous Development in the Hand as an Index to Skeletal Development", *Monograph of the Society for Research in Child Development*, I: 55; 1936.

8 Olson, W. C., "Reading as a Function of the Total Growth of the Child", *Supplementary Educational Monographs*, No. 51: 233-37; 1940.

9 Witty, Paul and Kopel, David, *Reading and the Educative Process*, Boston: Ginn and Company, 1939.

ing task almost impossible. An intelligence test incorporating both verbal and performance types of intelligence is ideal for clinical purposes, since comparisons of these two types of intelligence are important.¹⁰ The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children was used to test this area.

Personality: Nearly every investigator feels that personality plays an important role in reading problems.^{11, 12, 13} Witty¹³ cautions that the poor reader is not invariably maladjusted in his personality, however. Even so, the evidence is strong enough to warrant the careful consideration of this factor in a reading clinic. Accurate indications of personality stability may come from interviews with the parents, teachers, and the client. Examination of conflicting views of these three sources is especially significant. Of course, this information should be supplemented with standardized tests of personality. The California Test of Personality is an effective screening device in this connection, but the individual items are often more diagnostic than the percentile points. Should the child need further diagnostic work, the Rorschach or the Thematic Apperception Test may be given.

10 Wheeler, Lester R., "The Relation of Reading to Intelligence", *School and Society*. LXX: 225-7; October 8, 1949.

11 Witty, Paul, "Reading Success and Emotional Adjustment", *Elementary English*. 27: 281-96; May, 1950.

12 Raines, Shirley, "Educational Factors in Reading Retardation", *California Journal of Educational Research*. II: 51-6; March, 1951.

13 Witty, Paul, *Reading in Modern Education*, Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1949, 229-30.

Interest: Children's interests follow the interest patterns of adults as a group, i.e. boys have men's interests, and girls have women's interests.¹⁴ The only difference between the children and adults is the fact that the children's interests are less crystallized. Since interest areas determine in part a child's reading material, a satisfactory measurement of interests seems necessary. Interests of children can be determined by inquiring their likes and dislikes; their games and hobbies; their vocational choices. Amplification of this data may be obtained at the upper levels using standardized test blanks such as the Kuder or the Strong.

3. Learned Factors

Reading Readiness: Lack of reading readiness implies a lack of one or more of the traits or attitudes necessary to beginning reading. While most of these traits are included elsewhere in this study, some general traits, difficult to place elsewhere are included here.

a. A person's ability to use his native language is probably highly related to his reading success.¹⁵ Inability to use the language verbally may be a casual factor in reading difficulty. Conversely, poor reading may have contributed to a person's inability to use the language, i.e., most new words are obtained through reading. Each clinician will have to determine the

14 Bolling, Rexford, W., "A Sixth Grade Revision of the Kuder Preference Record", Unpublished Master's Thesis, Syracuse University, 1945.

15 Lorge, Irving, "Readability Formulae—An Evaluation", *Elementary English*. 26: 86-95; February, 1949.

criteria necessary to effectively gauge this factor.

b. Some tests have been devised to approximate the general reading readiness level of the pre-school child. The total scores of such tests are significant in themselves for determining whether the child is ready to read. This significance loses its reliability and the tests their predictive value as the child goes higher and higher in his education. Above the first three grades, the child finds such tests insulting.

Experiential background: Studies generally show that children who have been raised in a particularly sterile environment experience more difficulty in reading than normally raised children.¹⁶ Thus, it seems important for purposes of effective diagnosis to know the extent of the child's environmental contact and the degree to which he has been exposed to "enriching" experiences before he was exposed to reading. Interviews with the child and with the parents will give a fair idea of the factor. No objective score is possible, but it should not be ignored for that reason.

Achievement tests: Most clinics consider an achievement test a more reliable measure of scholastic progress than the child's report card. In a reading clinic it is sometimes necessary to depart from the rules and read some of the test items to a child. In this case, the time element is disregarded and the test becomes one of power. Caution should be exerted in interpreting these raw scores in terms of

the standardized norms. It is felt that this extension of time is necessary and justifiable in the light of the highly verbal nature of such tests, most requiring a great deal of reading ability. In measuring pupil progress in other areas of the curriculum, the student should not be penalized for his faulty reading. Achievement test scores should be verified with teacher judgments and child interviews.

Vocabulary: Although few studies are conducted in this area, some authors feel that reading ability is closely allied with the vocabulary level of the child.¹⁷ Various standardized tests are available for the determination of this level.

Letter perception: According to Wilson,¹⁸ one of the highest correlary factors with success in beginning reading is the ability to name and sound letters. The philosophy of our clinic has been to teach by letter perception when the methods of Gestalt learning have failed. Testing this ability is simple, involving only a printed alphabet and combinations of letters as a record blank.

Speed of reading: This skill is generally considered to be a supplementary skill achieved after proficiency in reading is attained. However, at the upper levels of reading instruction, some students seem to be poor readers because of too rapid reading or

17 Altus, W. D., "The Relationship Between Vocabulary and Literacy When Intelligence Is Held Constant", *Journal of Social Psychology*. XXXI: 299-301; May, 1950.

18 Wilson, Frank T., "Early Achievement in Reading", *Elementary School Journal*. XLII: 609-15; April, 1942.

16 Kopel, David, "Reading Readiness: Its Determination and Use", *Teacher's College Journal*. XIII: 64-70; January, 1942.

because of too slow reading. Using a reading pacer of some sort, the student can readily determine his own reading rate for a particular type of material by regulating the machinery until he is reading at a maximum speed for a specific degree of comprehension. This factor is also tested in some tests, including the Iowa Silent Reading Test. Work in increasing speed and comprehension have been reported as low as the fourth grade level.¹⁹

4. Social Factors

Socio-economic level: A relationship exists between socio-economic level and effective reading. The reason for this seems obvious. Children from higher level homes will experience more of the factors of reading readiness before and during school than children from the lower level homes since there is more money and free time with which to experiment. Usually an indication of socio-economic level can be obtained indirectly through an interview with the parents. Sometimes it is necessary to ask others about the family. One usually gauges this area in accordance with the occupation of the parents, the type of car or cars the family has, their home and other material possessions, although the finance company has been responsible for an inaccurate estimate once in a while.

Kindergarten and Nursery School training: Most research shows that the

social relationships built up in kindergarten and nursery schools lead to more effective reading later on.²⁰ Notation should be made on each case history showing the extent of such training.

Activity program vs. curriculum areas: While research is not conclusive in this area, evidence seems to favor the activity program for building social relationships.²¹ It would thus seem desirable to have a record of the type of schooling the child has had. Parental and child reactions to the school should also be recorded.

5. Special Diagnostic Area

Eye movement records: The Ophthalmograph, an instrument capable of photographing eye movements while the child is reading, gives a very satisfactory record of fixations, regressions, blinking, etc. Careful observation of the child while he is reading will also yield data in this area. Records should be kept and continued as the child progresses.

Reading Analysis Tests: Such tests as the Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty and the Gray Oral Reading Paragraphs give a word by word picture of the child's reading ability. While some practice is necessary to give these tests, it seems incredible that they are not used more frequently. Such tests can also be used to furnish a record of improvement made through reading therapy.

Please turn to page 128.

19 Bridges, Lucile, "Speed versus Comprehension in Elementary Reading", *Journal of Educational Psychology*. 32: 314-20; 1941.

20 Teegarden, Lorene, "The Kindergarten and Reading Reversals", *Childhood Education*. 9: 82-3; 1932.

21 Hunnicutt, C. W., "Reading of Children in Activity and Regular Schools in New York City", *Elementary School Journal*. XLIII: 530-38; May, 1943.

What Research Says to the Reading Teacher

—AGATHA TOWNSEND—

RESEARCH CONSULTANT, EDUCATIONAL RECORDS BUREAU

From High School to College: A Problem For Reading Research

Most reading research is done in answer to needs felt by *teachers*. An unlooked-for failure cries out for explanation. Unexpected success with a new method needs research if results are to be duplicated. Partial success or partial failure demands study of the elements in the situation to see which respond to treatment and which are unaffected. This is the stuff that research is made of.

The subject matter of research, however, is really the reader himself rather than the process of reading. If our pupils were never asked to read, we should all be out of a job. There is more than mere coincidence in the fact that the greatest stress on our reading programs has occurred at the time when the greatest flood of printing has been let loose on our society. But do we know how this affects the reader's individual experience? Where do the greatest demands on his reading skills occur? What research will meet the needs of *readers*? How can we find out?

A recent canvas of student experience reveals that at least college freshmen are fully articulate enough to assign us research topics by the score. A group of 470 freshmen was asked about experiences in taking the great

step from school to college.¹ What were their major difficulties? How did they adjust? How could we help them more? Literally dozens of factors emerged—factors associated with high school preparation, college orientation, social and moral stresses, academic ability, or matching the wrong college with the wrong student. Among all the individualized material—the experience which was not duplicated from one student to another—emerged certain common, well-nigh universal complaints. Nothing was more striking than the spontaneous cry that went up about reading in college. And nothing more devastating than the accusations made!

"I just never learned to read!" they said. Can this be true? "Functional literacy" for military training programs has been defined as fourth-grade reading ability. What is functional literacy for the first year of college? The freshmen were not asked to define it; but they did say things like this: "The sheer length of assignments, and the bulk of pages I have to get through was absolutely unbelievable at first. Unfortunately, it was all too true." "It is not merely the many books you have to look up to

¹The study of which this is a part is reported fully in *College Freshmen Speak Out*, published by Harper & Brothers, 1956. The investigation was sponsored by the Committee on School and College Relations of the Educational Records Bureau.

find the information you need. It is being able to draw out pertinent facts, and decide what to do when two or more authors disagree." They are also quite sure that college reading competence is *not* the same as high school reading competence. "My high school assignments were much too definite. All the thinking was done for you." "I realize now I always used to read as if the teacher was looking over my shoulder. Now I have to *think* when I read."

To many students, it is very illuminating, but baffling, to discover that reading skills cannot be applied indiscriminately. "I have always been a fast reader, and I'm glad of that, because it certainly helps me cover the ground. But I have to learn where to slow down. I was amazed to discover myself reading and re-reading." On the other hand, a boy reports: "I wish I could learn not to read everything as if it was a chemistry book. I can grasp details, all right, but when I'm faced with a novel for the English course I have to stay up nights."

If college does make new demands, are the students ready to meet them? "What I come up against all the time is my poor vocabulary. If I can work on that, I think I might be able to get by." "I never realized that taking notes was *part of reading*. Now I think I read pretty well, but have to learn how to summarize things for myself so I can keep them in mind when I go on."

When the adult, the reading teacher or clinician, or the instructor faced with classes unable to assimilate his assignments, takes a look at the comments made by the freshmen, his first

impulse may be to say: "Well, we knew this all the time. This is what we have been trying to tell high school students (and teachers) right along." Students need to be able to read fast and accurately. They need to read critically. They need to learn about library use and note-taking, about comparisons of sources, about building the vocabulary required by their subjects. In short, they need to learn to do college reading. These "research assignments" don't amount to a thing that we haven't been talking about for years.

The students themselves may not be so easy to satisfy. The fact of the matter, what they are pointing out, is that neither the school nor the college *as yet provides the method or opportunity for them to learn*. Many of the freshmen in this study had good high school records. About two thirds of them were attending colleges with selective entrance standards. Is it possible that they were *good high school readers*, even though they were not good college readers? It seems not only possible but likely. *Surprise* is the keynote of many of the college students' comments. They are appalled at the length of assignments, at the maturity of thinking, at the critical reading, and at the strain put on skills which previously had led them to success in their study. They are clearly facing problems for which they have not been prepared, no matter how well recognized the problems may seem to their teachers.

What can be done? Are there ways of introducing "college" methods of reading and thinking in the high school

years? Or, would the introduction of such methods violate the purposes for which high school courses are set up? Does the college have a responsibility in this matter? It should be reiterated that many of these freshmen are high in achievement; some are even gifted.

Most colleges would probably agree that progress in both skills and thinking is a central goal in all their effort. Establishing that progress should be a challenge to the most able thinking we can muster from both high school and college research.

• • •

What Other Magazines Are Saying About the Teaching of Reading

MURIEL POTTER LANGMAN
EASTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE

Smith, Donald E. P., Roger L. Wood, James W. Downer and Alton L. Raygor. "Reading Improvement as a Function of Student Personality and Teaching Method," *Journal of Educational Psychology*, January 1956.

The purpose of this study was to find possible relationships between personality (in terms of anxiety and "permeability") and improvement in reading as affected by teaching methods. The methods used were the directive and non-directive, or to put it another way, the authoritarian and the permissive. Subjects were selected from among college students registering for a seven-week corrective reading course, and were placed in groups to be taught by either method after having been classified as to personality type through the use of a personality inventory developed for this study. The inventory classifies four personality types, of which two were used in this study. They were: "Type III conscientious but very

withdrawn, aggressively independent, suspicious, rigid in attitudes"

and "Type IV disorganized, sensitive, especially in interpersonal relations, imaginative, excessively dependent and cycloid." For the Type IV individuals, directive instruction was found to be almost twice as effective as non-directive instruction. For the Type III group, results were inconclusive, for reasons which the researchers discuss. They conclude that method of teaching is a major factor in the learning of Type IV individuals, who "gain security from their dependence upon structure provided by an authority figure."

Barbe, Walter B. "Problems in Reading Encountered by Gifted Children," *Elementary English*, May 1956.

This article stresses the fact that about half of our gifted children need instruction in reading as much as the less gifted and, in fact, it is not unusual for a gifted child to be referred to a

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reading clinic. With gifted children, as with all others, interest is a decisive factor in reading progress, and one serious problem in teaching them is to find material that is challenging, because they tend to reject material that is boring, i.e. of a lower interest level than their capacity requires. Some children who fail to participate in school reading activities, thus giving the impression that they cannot read, actually can read but will not do so in school.

Another problem is that of the child whose unusual memory causes him to misunderstand the nature of reading, and to infer that he is "reading" material when he can repeat it from memory. (When such a misunderstanding occurs, however, it seems to me that beginning reading instruction has been at fault, for at that time the concept of words and word meanings should be developing along with the concept of reading for understanding and for idea reproduction.) Still another problem is that of the bright child who is unable to admit his inability to recognize words and who consistently substitutes others more or less appropriate in meaning, or who "bluffs."

Gifted children may also ignore common, short words under the impression, received somewhere or other, that "little" words are not important to meaning. Here I should like to disagree with Dr. Barbe's statement that "These were words which he had come to realize were not important in most cases to his understanding." These words denote idea relationships, and the statement that they are not impor-

tant is a rationalization of the child's inability to recognize them, for they are actually very difficult to learn. Examples are *and*, *but*, *the*. However, whatever the cause, a child who cannot read or does not read such words must learn to read them for full reading comprehension.

Dr. Barbe concludes his article with descriptions of several errors made in classroom procedures which lead to poor reading. He urges that gifted children be taught to regard evaluation of what they read as the most important aspect of reading.

Eames, Thomas H. "Association Pathways in Language Disabilities," *Journal of Educational Psychology*, January 1956.

In this brief article Dr. Eames points out relationships between the localization of brain lesions and specific types of language disability. He concludes that there is great need for research in the neuro-physiology of language and in methods of teaching the child with language disability.

Betts, Emmett A. "Research on Reading as a Thinking Process," *Journal of Educational Research*, September 1956.

In this article Dr. Betts reviews the findings of three researchers in the field of reading comprehension. He draws from these findings a number of conclusions about relationships among literal reading, critical reading, verbal intelligence scores, and certain measurable types of critical thinking. Perhaps the most interesting of these conclusions is that there is a positive but

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very low relationship between the ability to do literal reading and the ability to do certain types of critical thinking in both science and the social studies.

After a summary of the implications of these three studies, Dr. Betts discusses critically present methods of reading diagnosis and instruction and urges further research in the areas of weakness in these methods. An excellent bibliography follows the article.

Petty, Walter T. "Critical Reading in the Primary Grades," *Elementary English*, May 1956.

Professor Petty discusses the nature of critical reading and points out that today's concept of reading implies thinking as well as word recognition, since efficient readers think about what they read as they read.

The purpose for which reading is carried on determines the complexity of the reading process. Reading to answer a factual question, the answer to which is to be found in so many words in the text is much simpler than reading to answer a question which involves judgment. After several kinds of critical reading have been described, its dependence on both attitude and previously existing knowledge on the part of the reader is considered. Even young children can carry on the critical reading process in problem solving situations and should in fact do so from the very beginning of their reading experience. Dr. Petty gives several examples of ways in which the problem solving and critical reading approach may be motivated for young children.

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Interesting Books For The Reading Teacher

—ELOISE B. CASON—

BLOOMFIELD (NEW JERSEY) PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Walsh, Ann Marie. *Self-Concepts of Bright Boys with Learning Difficulties*. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1956. pp. 79. \$2.50.

Of current interest to reading teachers is an understanding of how children perceive themselves, to what extent they feel capable or handicapped when "looking inward."

The self-concept, if one of defeat, hinders learning. Repeated difficulty in reading may bring to the child the attitude that "I must be dumb," or "I'm helpless with a book," and hence not only is attention reduced and initiative blunted, but evasion and rationalization are introduced. Likewise, the boy of ten struggling to be virile and daring, may find overly simple or trivial reading dull, if not humiliating.

To explore this reasoning experimentally, Miss Walsh posed the question: Do boys with learning difficulties have less adequate self-concepts than children making satisfactory progress? Two equated groups of 2nd through 5th grade, mentally superior, boys were selected on the basis of having or not having academic success. Given unfinished stories involving a personal situation, the boys completed the stories by manipulating Driscoll Playkit dolls and by explanation of their play. The crucial assumption was made that children will project into

doll play their own feelings and ways of perceiving the environment. The behavior of the dolls yields insight into the child's perception of himself. Differences between the action of the boy dolls of the successful and unsuccessful pupils were measured.

Results indicate that boy dolls of low achievers were less able to follow interests, express feelings freely, and respond to the environment, and were more frequently defensive or aggressive in behavior. Dolls of low achievers were more frequently criticized and rejected, but were able to respond most adequately in an atmosphere relatively free from pressure.

Educational implications are drawn through inference from the doll play. For children with warped self-adequacy, whether the result or cause of school failure, remedial measures are necessary. Teachers may help children overcome feelings of stupidity or defensiveness by highlighting genuine success and by providing challenges in which success is possible. Curiosity, exploration and responsibility are to be encouraged. Providing the teacher accepts her own feelings, she may be able to encourage emotional expression, at the same time maintaining the limits necessary for class morale. Discipline may be so administered that misbehavior rather than self-concept is curbed. Familiarity on the part of

teachers with common personality defenses can yield a more sensitive course of action.

Professional psychological help does not replace the function of the teacher, but is more meaningfully requested when the child's view of himself has been considered. A succinct study, *Self-Concepts* provides a factual base for one aspect of motivation, child study, and parent conferences. It offers a link in the reading teacher's task of identifying casual factors in reading failure.

Jack E. Smith

Psychologist

Freeport, L.I., Public Schools

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Duker, Sam and Nally, Thomas P. *The Truth About Your Child's Reading*. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1956. pp. 181. \$3.00,

This book is written primarily to help parents evaluate the methods used to teach reading to their children. The authors state frankly that the spark that jolted them into writing was the publication of Dr. Flesch's *WHY JOHNNY CAN'T READ*. Now that Dr. Flesch's best seller has appeared in a twenty-five cent edition, there is perhaps more need than ever for teachers to be able to recommend materials to parents that will give them insight into the actual methods used in the classroom. *THE TRUTH ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S READING* has "analyzed Dr. Flesch's book page by page and paragraph by paragraph," and made careful note of each mis-statement. It tracks down the evidence or lack of it. These findings

will be welcomed by busy teachers and principals.

The book attempts to give a picture of a complete reading program in the elementary school. It shows clearly that an honest-to-goodness program is more than word calling or phonic skills. Some teachers may not agree with all the skills outlined in the five stages, the "readiness stage," the "first steps in reading," the "fledgling" stage, the "novice" stage, and the "apprentice" stage. In the earlier stages little emphasis is placed on functional reading. The authors state, however, that a good reading program does not necessarily have to be the same as the one described, but that it must meet the "standards" set up. They see learning to read as a complicated process, one that all children do not master at the same rate nor with the same interest. Their five stages, they explain, may be found in a single classroom or may be spread over the six grades in the elementary school. The chief value of recognizing the stages is to identify the skills that are learned at various levels.

In an effort to make a point or to describe a procedure, the explanations may sometimes confuse rather than clarify. For example, it is doubtful that many parents will fully understand the description of what is going on as the teacher works with three groups of pupils in the classroom. It takes an experienced teacher to straighten out the activities of the "readiness" group, the "fledgling" group and the "first-steps-in-reading" group.

Good advice is given in the chapter "What You and Your Community Can Do." School people know there are many shortcomings in our schools today, with overcrowding, need for specialists, lack of teachers. Constructive criticisms and action from the community are most welcome. The authors suggest some ways parents can become informed about their schools and thus become more able to make learning conditions better. The recommended checklists for interpreting parent observations are perhaps too pedagogical, as they use such terms as "centers of interest," "appropriate study skills," "low-level vocabulary." Some such means, however, could well be used to help parents "see" what is going on when they visit classrooms. The book could be used to good advantage in parent study groups to supplement teacher conferences and classroom visiting.

Parents are reading WHY JOHNNY CAN'T READ. They are bothered about the schools' reading program. Teachers are explaining methods they use which help children learn to read in the real sense of the word. THE TRUTH ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S READING is timely. Both parents and teachers will find it informative. It is overly repetitious and somewhat tedious at times, but it is an honest effort to inform the parent that teaching a pupil to read is a professional job, not something anyone can do.

Grace Alder Dorsey
State Department of Education
Baltimore, Maryland

FOR THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Witty, Paul. *How To Improve Your Reading*. Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1956. pp. 380.

Important news for junior high school teachers! Here is a textbook in reading which realistically integrates sequential skill development with reading interests. It is more or less of a junior carbon copy of Witty's HOW TO BECOME A BETTER READER which has proved so successful on the senior high school level. On the other hand, it has many features which the senior book does not have. Teachers and pupils will be delighted with the total format, the readable print, and the inclusion of material aimed at a variety of maturity and interest levels.

Teachers who desire to use the book as a basic text will find a logical development of skills from page 1 to page 380. Witty has pupils begin by investigating how well they read, indicates reasons for better reading, and defines reading. A great deal of attention is devoted to study skills such as retention, reading for the main idea, reading for details, following directions, critical reading, and speed in reading. A fascinating chapter deals with the reading of illustrations, and another with suggestions for improving oral reading. Attention is paid to word attack and vocabulary development. Study habits are emphasized and definite suggestions are given for self-improvement.

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choose sections for work very easily. The table of contents and especially the index isolate the various important skills to be taught. Junior high school teachers, uncertain of the skills which need emphasis and uncertain about teaching techniques, will find this volume more satisfactory than a professional textbook.

Perhaps the most important feature of the book is its organization for efficient teaching and learning. Each of the fifteen chapters, called lessons, contains interesting, short exercises to help the pupil practice what is being preached. Most of the chapters or lessons contain vocabulary exercises as well. A general reading exercise may be taken after each chapter, and provision is made for charting results of these exercises in terms of reading

rate and comprehension. A bibliography of books for junior high school readers is also included.

In recent years junior high school teachers have found a number of books helpful in the teaching of reading. There are books dealing with definite skills but ineffectual reading material. There are books with stimulating reading material containing hit-or-miss reading exercises or no development of reading skills at all. Some of the material has been useful, but none has been really tailored for junior high school needs until *HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR READING*.

H. Alan Robinson

District Coordinator of Reading Services

*Central High School District No. 1
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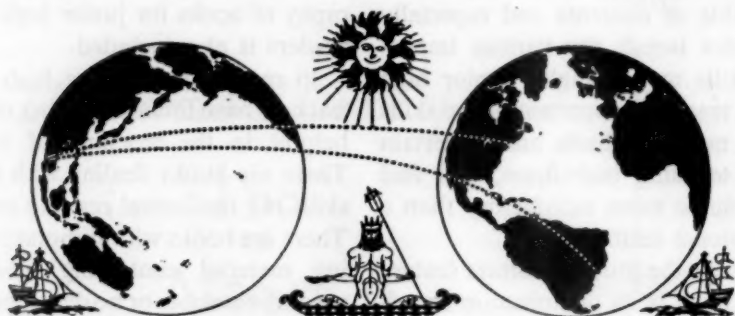


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FOR THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL Wilbur Schramm, Virginia Castadasi, John K. Dunn, Melissa Miner, *Adventures for Americans*, with a Reading Development Program by William D. Sheldon, and Leonard Braam, with Herbert Potell, General Consultant. pp. 718.

Freier, Robert, and Arnold Leslie Lazarus. *Adventures in Modern Literature*, Fourth Edition, with Herbert Potell, Consultant in Reading Development Program. pp. 690.

New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1956, (*Adventures in Literature Series*.)

Designed for the "reluctant readers" of the eleventh and Twelfth grades, *ADVENTURES FOR AMERICANS* and *ADVENTURES IN MODERN LITERATURE* represent a recognition of the need for worthwhile reading material for high school students who require special training in the acquisition of reading skills. Probably the most outstanding aspect of these two anthologies is their plan for building skills, yet the materials used are essentially literary.

ADVENTURES FOR AMERICANS is the stronger book of the two. Its layout is inviting, with illustrations which contribute to reading comprehension as well as to page decoration. Selections are from some of our best authors, with considerable space allotted to such noteworthy moderns as Van Wyck Brooks, Steven Vincent Benet, Carl Carmer, Oliver LaFarge, Robert Sherwood, and Emily Dickinson.

Supplemented by "The Reading

Workshop," *ADVENTURES FOR AMERICANS* offers an orderly approach to such reading problems as vocabulary from context, idioms, and word structure. It gives some attention to the importance of the topic sentence, the value of significant details, and the need for drawing inferences from printed materials.

It is somewhat surprising, therefore, to find comparatively little attention given to development of the reading skills needed for the enjoyment of poetry. High school students are repeatedly baffled by poetic devices; metaphors, inverted order, and varied rhythms are indeed distracting to many "reluctant readers." More help in developing these skills would doubtless have been welcomed by teachers and students alike.

The material in *ADVENTURES IN MODERN LITERATURE* seems somewhat uneven. While the essays, biographies, and poetry appear adequate, the fiction is "thin." In fact, some of the short stories may be hard to justify, although Willa Cather's *Neighbor Rosicky* is a standard and valuable bit of character delineation which should be acceptable in almost any high school anthology.

On the whole, however, these books do represent an opportunity for the teacher of English to become a teacher of reading as well as a teacher of appreciation.

Vesta M. Parsons, Chairman
Language Arts Department
Senior High School,
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President's Message

NANCY LARRICK

As the December issue of *THE READING TEACHER* goes to press, I am just recovering from a strenuous two-day meeting of the Board of Directors of the International Reading Association held on October 6th and 7th at Random House in New York. Every Board member was present as well as the chairman of the Elections Committee, Dr. Ruth Strang; the chairman of the Publicity Committee, Dr. Helen Huus; the chairman of the Organization Committee, Dr. Mary C. Austin; the Associate Chairman of the Organization Committee, Mr. C. B. Routley of Toronto, Canada; and the Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. Donald L. Cleland.

With news of the World Series coming to us by radio and television and music from the Pulaski Bay parade blaring through the open windows, we concluded that we were the only people in New York who were hard at work on that particular weekend. But work we did, and much was accomplished, I believe.

At that time, Dr. Austin and Mr. Routley reported that 46 local councils and 2 intermediate councils have completed formal affiliation with the International Reading Association. Thirteen other groups are in the process of completing their affiliation.

Dr. Donald L. Cleland reported

that as of October first, we had 6,923 paid annual members and 22 life members. In addition, there are 1,292 paid subscribers to *THE READING TEACHER*.

Forty-five states are represented in the membership list with only Delaware, Idaho and North Dakota without any IRA members. In addition, there are members in the District of Columbia, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Canal Zone. The International reaches of the IRA show up in memberships in Canada, England, Sweden, Africa, and Mexico. Canada leads with 697 members, slightly more than ten per cent of the total membership of the organization. Subscriptions to *THE READING TEACHER* also go to France, the Philippine Republic, and Israel.

BETTER READERS FOR OUR TIMES, the proceedings of the 1956 annual conference, was published in September. Review copies were sent to close to 200 editors of education journals and education editors of daily newspapers. By October first, 3,773 copies had been sold, with new orders coming in steadily. Copies of this 176-page volume may be purchased through Scholastic Magazines, 33 W. 42nd Street, New York which generously agreed to publish and distribute the book on a non-profit basis. The

price: \$2.00 per copy; \$1.50 for each additional copy purchased at the same time and sent to the same address.

Plans for the 1957 annual IRA conference were discussed by the Board. Dr. Albert J. Harris, president-elect of the International Reading Association, will serve as Convention Manager. Dr. Nancy Larrick, IRA President, will be in charge of the program and the official proceedings. Time and place of the conference: May 10 and

11 at the Hotel New Yorker and adjoining Manhattan Center in New York City. The General Assembly, official representative meeting of the organization, will be held Friday night, May 10th, at the Hotel New Yorker. We hope that every local and intermediate council and many individual members of the organization will plan to attend the sessions of the General Assembly and the annual conference.

To become a member of the International Reading Association or to get information about forming a local council, fill in the coupon below:

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News of Local Reading Councils

Welcome, New Councils!

Canada—Hamilton and District Reading Council.

President, Mrs. F. G. Irvine,
Box 491, 14 St. Margaret's Road,
Ancaster, Ontario, Canada.

Maryland—Queen Anne's County Council.

President, Mrs. Bertha Emory,
Grasonville, Maryland.

Minnesota—Minnesota Intermediate Reading Association.

President, Dr. Victor L. Lohmann,
111 Eighth St., South,
St. Cloud, Minnesota.

New York—Finger Lakes Council.

President, Mrs. A. Gordon Nelson,
820 Triphammer Road,
Ithaca, New York.

Ohio—Defiance College Council.

President, Miss Rachel Miller,
Faculty Coordinator, Dr. M. Jerry Weiss,
Defiance College,
Defiance, Ohio.

Texas—Dallas Council.

President, Mr. Herman F. Benthul,
3700 Ross Avenue,
Dallas, Texas.

New Organization Committee Members

The October *Reading Teacher* announced the names of members of the Organization Committee who stand ready to assist local and intermediate councils in their activities. To this list should be added the names of: Dr. Ralph W. House, Northeast Missouri State Teachers College, Kirksville,

Councils are requested to send news of their meetings and plans for the future to Dr. Mary C. Austin, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University, Lawrence Hall, Kirkland Street, Cambridge 38, Massachusetts.

Missouri and Dr. Theodore Clymer, College of Education, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis 14, Minnesota. Dr. Clymer replaces Dr. Maynard Reynolds as the Minnesota member of the committee.

Council Notes

The Gerald A. Yoakam Council sponsored the University of Pittsburgh's Twelfth Annual Reading Conference Luncheon which was held in June. Mr. Bill Martin of the Winston Publishing Company, delighted the large audience with his storytelling. The conference, directed by Dr. Donald L. Cleland, was well-attended. The visiting speakers included Dr. Gerald A. Yoakam, Dr. Paul Witty, Dr. Laura Zirbes, Miss Margaret Robinson, and Dr. Nancy Larrick. In addition to Dr. J. Allen Figurel, many others from the schools of Metropolitan Pittsburgh and from the University Faculty played a very important part in its success.

The Albany City Area Reading Council, Albany, New York, had as its speaker at the annual meeting in May, Miss Ruth Solomon of the Albany Study Center for Learning Dis-

abilities. Her topic was, "Reading Problems in a Classroom Situation." She was introduced by Dr. Roy Newton of New York State Teachers College, Albany, Reading Laboratory. Dr. Newton is council adviser.

The Metropolitan Toronto Reading Association, Toronto, Canada, held two meetings in October at which Dr. William S. Gray, the University of Chicago, spoke on the subjects of "On Their Own in Reading" and "Reading Attitudes and Skills Needed for Our Times." From Monday, November 12 through Thursday, November 15, the council sponsored joint meetings with the Speech Arts Association. "Encouraging Appreciation of Literature" provided the theme with Mr. Bill Moore, Fellow of Trinity College, London, England and Supervisor of Oral English, Hamilton, Ontario, as demonstrator in the Junior and Intermediate Divisions of the Alexander Muir and Coburn Junior High Schools. For the Primary Divisions, Miss Iris Covey, Consultant for the Copp Clark Company, gave demonstrations of the group teaching of reading during the following week. Mr. M. K. MacDonald, public school inspector, is president of the Metropolitan Toronto Reading Association.

The Columbus Reading Council, Columbus, Ohio, devoted its September meeting to a panel discussion of the topic "Reading's Challenge to Teachers." Dr. W. W. Miller, assistant superintendent of the Columbus Schools served as moderator. Panel members were: Mrs. Barbara Van-

dayburg and Mrs. Lois Coldran (Kindergarten), Mrs. Jane Faechle (Primary), Mrs. Ruth Linehan (Intermediate), Mrs. Verona Rothenbush (Junior High), and Mrs. Arema Kirven (Senior High). Officers for 1956-57 are: President, Mrs. Mary Parrett; President-elect, Mrs. Ethel Trotter; Treasurer, Mrs. Louella Hofstetter; Secretary, Mrs. Glenna Palmer; Membership Chairman, Mrs. Thelma Wagstaff.

When the Wisconsin Intermediate Council met at Wisconsin State College in March, Dr. William S. Gray addressed the group on reading trends around the world and gave interesting sidelights of his travels in the study of reading instruction. New officers elected at this meeting were: President, Dr. Arthur Schoeller; President-elect, Miss Mildred Brady; Secretary, Miss Marion Hicks; Treasurer, Miss Dorothy Gardner. To the Past-President, Sister Mary Julitta, O.S.F., of the Cardinal Stritch College, goes a large vote of gratitude for her tireless efforts on behalf of the council during the period of reorganization.

In October, the Wisconsin Intermediate Council held a business meeting at the Cardinal Stritch College where members then attended the annual Reading Conference of the College. The theme was "Developing More Powerful Thought Readers." Dr. Helen Blair Sullivan addressed the general sessions on Listening and Reading Comprehension Abilities and Recent Trends in Reading. Sectional meetings included demonstrations and

lectures on the development of interpretative abilities and reading study skills, and a panel on the improvement of the reading program.

The newly formed Montgomery County, Maryland Council, reports that it has been honored by the selection of one of its members, Mrs. Doris Newman, as director of special reading services in Prince George County, Maryland. This year also sees the addition of a reading clinic to the services being rendered by the Montgomery County School System. Council meetings will be held at the clinic in the future.

The Finger Lakes Council, Ithaca, New York, was formed in August, 1955 at Cornell University. After its organization, the group had four meetings with varied programs centered around the theme "Motivation in Reading." Among the highlights of the year were a panel discussion on organization for classroom instruction, a display and demonstration of reading aids through the grades, and an exhibit showing current practices in the teaching of reading from Kindergarten through the elementary grades. The latter was a feature of both the Cornell Farm and Home Week and the Congress of Parents and Teachers Conference.

The officers of the Finger Lakes Council for 1956-57 are: Lillian V. Mastrotto, president; Mrs. Martha Nelson, first vice-president; Mr. Gerald Clark, second vice-president; Mrs. Laura Hunt, secretary; Mrs. Helen

Howell, treasurer; Louise Wilson, corresponding secretary. The theme for the year is "The Gifted Child." Dr. Marvin D. Glock was the October speaker for the meeting on the Cornell campus.

The Defiance College Chapter of I.R.A., Defiance, Ohio, held a seminar on reading at its November meeting. Three questions were considered: What is the high school doing to meet the needs of college work? How have we met the reading problems in our school? and How can the home and school work together for more effective reading? Newly elected officers are: Rachel Miller, president; Dorothy Fetter, president-elect; Marilyn Van Deylen, secretary; Irene Ingle, treasurer and corresponding secretary; and Dr. M. Jerry Weiss, faculty coordinator.

Hamilton and District Reading Council, Ontario, Canada, held its first meetings of the year on October 19 and 20 with Miss Gwen Horsman of the Detroit Public Schools as speaker. In November Mrs. Elizabeth A. Simpson of the Reading Center of the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago was guest speaker.

The Minnesota Intermediate Reading Association held a luncheon on Friday, October 26, with Dr. Rachael Bodoh, director of elementary education of the Hibbing Public Schools, as speaker. The Council plans to have three News Letters throughout the year. Brother Leonard Courtney of Winona will serve as editor.

Diagnosis of Reading Difficulties

Continued from page 106

Visual Span: Using a projecting tachistoscope, it is possible to determine how wide a span is seen by the client for each fixation. In some instances, this technique is diagnostic. For example, recently a graduate student was being tested with the Tachistoscope. While standing on the right side of the machine, he could identify words up to one-one-hundredth of a second. While standing on the left side of the machine, he could not identify words at all, except at a full second, and after turning his head slightly. Subsequent examinations by a doctor revealed the possibility of brain tumor. Further tests are now under way. When the difficulty can be identified as too narrow a perceptual span, it may be corrected through tachistoscopic practice.

The above represents an outline of a careful diagnostic procedure which should yield enough information so that a satisfactory program in remedial work can be set up. The teacher, in her classroom might develop a shortened form of this procedure for her use in helping poor readers.

• • •

Have You Ordered Your Copy of the First Official Proceedings?

There is still time to order your copy of "Better Readers for Our Times," the official proceedings of the first annual

meeting of the International Reading Association. The book contains all the papers and discussion of seventy-five reading experts who participated in the conference. Turn to page 101 for details on how to order your copy.

Councils whose names are not listed in the News column by the Organization Chairman are urged to complete the details of their affiliation as soon as possible so that a permanent list of councils may be listed in THE READING TEACHER for December.

Plans Are Now Being Made for the Second Annual Convention

Your officers have begun plans for the second annual convention of the International Reading Association, which will be held in New York City, May 10 and 11. The convention center will be Hotel New Yorker and Manhattan Center, next door. Dr. Albert J. Harris, president-elect, will serve as Convention Manager. Your suggestions for program theme and participants are eagerly solicited by your president. Attendance is expected to surpass this year's 2,400 at Chicago. If you are a council member, now is the time to discuss your plans for representation at the Annual Assembly Meeting.

The International Reading Association

a professional organization for those genuinely concerned

... with the improvement of reading programs and teaching procedures

Both Developmental and Remedial

For children

For adults

... and providing adequate guidance in all situations in which reading serves as a vital aid to learning

Purpose of the Association

- To encourage the study of reading problems at all educational levels
- To stimulate and promote research in developmental, corrective and remedial reading
- To study the various factors that influence progress in reading
- To publish the results of pertinent and significant investigations and practices
- To act as a clearing house for information relating to reading
- To disseminate knowledge helpful in the solution of problems related to reading
- To sponsor conferences and meetings planned to implement the purpose of the Association

HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER

Membership in the International Reading Association is open to all persons engaged in the teaching and supervision of reading at any school level, to parents, and to all others interested in the purposes of the Association.

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